

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 15

May, 1933

Number 5

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Book Reviews

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

May Day, 1933—Fascism in Germany—Capitalist Weakness, Not Strength—Crisis of Second International—"Revolution" to Defeat Revolution—Growth of Communism—Fascism Raised to Power from Above—Disorganisation of Working Class—Exterminating Marxism Again—Condition of Fascist Maintenance of Power—Rôle of Social Democracy for Fascism—Communist Party Unbroken—Capitulation of German Social Democracy—New Downfall of Second International—The End of a Blind Alley—“Without Glory and Without Honour”—Mutual Accusations within Second International—Social Fascism Proved—British Labour Manifesto—Abdication of Leadership—United Front with Bourgeoisie—Identity with German Social Democracy—Practical Support of Fascism—How Reformism Builds Fascism—Responsibility of Social Democracy—United Working Class Front—Barbarism or Communism

ON this May Day of 1933 we are faced with a situation whose gravity requires no emphasis. Fascism holds temporarily the upper hand over the strongest working-class movement in the capitalist world, and is seeking to exterminate all working-class organisation and agitation in the centre of the world working class outside the Soviet Union. The intensity of the world crisis has brought the class struggle to this extreme point, shattering all the illusions of capitalist democracy. The forces of reaction in every country are accelerated by the success of the offensive in Germany to carry forward their attacks in other countries. The advance to war on the Soviet Union is hastened by the victory of Fascism in Germany, and is visibly carried forward both in the East and in the West. The Four Power Pact approaches the Rome and Washington negotiations, the drawing together of the Black International of MacDonald, Hitler, Mussolini and the

Pope, the hastening secret diplomatic and strategic preparations, the anti-Soviet campaign in England, all point to the supreme offensive of reaction and war that is gathering. The capitalist offensive of the past twelve years is reaching its most intense point. In this moment of storm the Second International, as in 1914, is performing its supreme betrayal, is directly opposing working-class unity, and is at the same time breaking up as previously and dissolving into its constituent parts ; its principal section, German Social Democracy, breaks away in order to enter the service of Fascism, thus revealing the inevitable outcome of the line of capitalist democracy in every country. The Communist International is alone carrying forward the working-class fight. The need of the most active working-class resistance and organised unity to meet this offensive is of an urgency that will be readily understood by every socialist worker. This May Day must see a big step forward in the building of the united front that is now gathering in every country.

WE need to face clearly and plainly all the issues raised by the victory of Fascism in Central Europe. The victory of Fascism in Germany represents the highest point yet reached by the Counter-Revolution since the war. But this victory of the Counter-Revolution does not represent the growing strength of capitalism. On the contrary, it is the direct result of the extreme aggravation of the world crisis and of the instability of capitalism, of the shattering of Versailles and all the peace settlements, of the growth of social contradictions and mass discontent, bursting all peaceful and legal forms ; that is to say, of the very advance of all the forces which finally make for the victory of the proletarian revolution, since the proletarian revolution can alone solve these contradictions, which Fascism can only intensify.

EVER since the war the inevitable downfall of capitalism in Europe and the impending victory of the proletarian revolution has been an open book for all to read. The bourgeois régime, conscious of its weakness, is compelled to resort to ever more desperate expedients to prolong for a little

longer its lease of life. For fifteen years the bourgeoisie has depended on the direct support of Social Democracy to hold back the workers and maintain its rule. But in the last few years the hold of Social Democracy on the workers has begun to weaken, as shown in its declining numbers, its increasing left manœuvres and the growth of Communism. In face of this growing revolutionisation of the workers, the bourgeoisie has hastened to act, while there was yet time, before Communism has yet won its visibly approaching majority position in the working class, while the disorganisation of the workers by Social Democracy could still prevent successful resistance, and has brought into play the dangerous hazard of Fascism to smash the working class.

THE consequent confusion and disarray of Social Democracy and the Second International, which simultaneously finds itself under attack, while protesting its faithful service (under attack, only because its lower organisations have passed beyond its control, and therefore require to be broken by the bourgeoisie), and simultaneously seeks to cringe to the hand that strikes it and adapt itself to the new régime, is an inevitable accompaniment and by-product of this turn of bourgeois policy. The lowest level of this degradation is revealed by the Labour Party, who have not yet developed sufficiently to come under the harrow in their turn, and meanwhile accompany the desperate cries for help and assistance from the victims next door, who are suffering because they put their faith in capitalist democracy, with pious hymns on the virtues of capitalist democracy.

BUT the advance to Fascism means the destruction of legality, not by the revolutionaries, but by the bourgeoisie, and the laying bare to all of the class struggle as a direct conflict of force. In order to hold off the revolution, the bourgeoisie is compelled to play at revolution, and to seek to "outbid the revolution." They are compelled to preach to the masses contempt for peace and legality, which were formerly their best protection. To prevent the working-class

revolution, they are compelled to stage a sham "revolution," and even to dub it a "socialist revolution" (Goering's speech to the Nazi factory cells). The Junkers, Barons and industrial magnates, in order to maintain their power, are compelled to place themselves at the head of bandit hordes with cries of "Down with Interest-Capital," "Down with Unearned Income," "Nationalisation of the Trusts," "Nationalisation of the Banks," "Socialisation of all enterprises ripe for socialisation, &c." (Nazi Twenty-five Points Programme—in certain respects markedly similar to the Labour Party Programme). The modern Black Hundreds have to proclaim themselves "Socialists," and enemies of "capitalism," in order to win a hearing and save capitalism. Such is the measure of the strength of capitalism revealed in the present victory of the Counter-Revolution.

NOT the weakening of the revolutionary advance, but its rapid growth, lies behind the present turn of the bourgeoisie to Fascism. This was notably shown in the last election before the Fascist Terror in November, 1932. Not only Social Democracy, but also Fascism, was revealed as in definite decline, and only Communism was advancing. The Fascists with 11.7 million votes lost two million votes. The Social Democrats with 7.2 millions lost 700,000. The Communists with 6 millions gained 700,000. The results in Greater Berlin were still more striking. The Communists, who had been previously the third party, advanced to the position of the leading party with 860,000 votes. The Fascists fell to second place with 719,000. The Social Democrats fell to third place with 646,000. This was the movement of forces revealed in the last elections in Germany before the suppression of all free elections. Communism was advancing. The Fascists wave was ebbing, and visibly in danger of dispersing as rapidly as it had arisen. This was the situation that led the bourgeois dictatorship hastily to intervene before it was too late, to suppress all democratic elections, and to hold out a saving hand to Fascism and place it in power where it could use the state apparatus to revive its forces.

FASCISM thus did not come to power on a flood tide in Germany any more than in Italy, as it would now like to paint a mythical picture in both cases. On the contrary, it was immediately after the overwhelming vote of no confidence from the country, represented by the loss of two million votes, alongside the actual increase of the aggregate "Marxist" vote and majority over the Fascist vote, that Fascism was hastily called to the government, solely from above, by the direct intervention of Hindenburg (elected by Social Democracy to the defeat of the candidate of the Fascists), and entered on its task to wipe out "Marxism"—that is, to wipe out the majority, relative to which it was a minority. There could be no clearer demonstration of the operation of the bourgeois dictatorship from above, and the rôle of Fascism as its instrument. Fascism on the ebb was jerked up to power solely by intervention from above. This is all-important to remember, when the myth is now attempted to be created of Fascism as a great "national movement from below" sweeping forward and conquering power. No more in Germany than in Italy was Fascism capable of fighting and conquering power (unless the police were present to help them, the Fascist mobs were mainly notorious for their speed in dispersal as soon as it came to fighting; gang assaults and the stab in the dark were their principal tactics; and even to-day their heroic bullying exploits are only performed when they are sure of numbering twenty to one, and with especial zest against aged persons and women). Alike in Italy and in Germany Fascism was lifted up and placed in power solely by the higher authorities, represented in Italy by the King, and in Germany by Hindenburg.

NOT by its own strength, nor even by the superior strength of the bourgeois dictatorship, but mainly and decisively through the paralysis and disorganisation of the working-class forces by Social Democracy, Fascism to-day holds power and is able for a time to have the upper hand of the superior working class forces. The accession of Fascism to power was made possible only through two conditions.

First, through the combination of all the bourgeois forces and the state machine to build it up and assist its advent to power, expressed in the coalition of Hindenburg, Von Papen, Hugenberg and Hitler, that is, in the coalition of the state machine, of the general staff, of the Junker landlords, of the industrial magnates, of the millionaire press, and of the Fascist gangs and demagogy. Second, through the disorganisation and immobilising of the working-class forces by Social Democracy and its refusal of the united front repeatedly proposed by the Communist Party during the decisive preparatory period of Von Papen and Schleicher and immediately after the accession of Hitler. Only through this combination of conditions was the final accession to power of Fascism possible in a state like Germany with an overwhelmingly predominant industrial proletariat, fifteen years after a victorious workers' revolution. But this means that the continuance of Fascism in power depends on its being able to maintain the disorganisation and division of the working-class, without which its power could not last a week. Therefore Fascism sets itself with feverish haste to the main task of smashing and breaking up the organisations of the working class.

FASCISM sets itself to exterminate Marxism, that is, to exterminate the independent working-class movement and the fight for Socialism. The attempt is not a new one. A hundred years ago "all the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise the spectre of Communism : Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies." The collapse of 1848 was heralded as the collapse of Socialism. In the decade after the Commune, on the basis of thirty thousand corpses, Thiers boasted that "we have heard the last of Socialism." In the following decade Bismarck set himself to stamp out Socialism in Germany with all the power of the most highly organised Prussian police and bureaucratic system, and after twelve years had to recognise that he had met his master. Down the long gallery of the years the ghosts of the past, Cavaignac and Gallifet, Thiers and Bismarck, Pobiedonostsev and Stolypin,

Kornilov and Kolchak, the hangmen and butchers and gaolers of bourgeois rule may welcome with a spectral sneer the new accessions to their ranks, Hitler and Goering and Goebbels, taking their place alongside Horthy and Tsankov and Chiang Kai Shek. But these older attempts were against a still early and newly rising movement. To-day the attempt is against a powerful and developed movement on the eve of power. That it will fail like every previous attempt and end in ignominious collapse requires no demonstration.

Wherever, in whatever shape, and under whatever conditions the class struggle obtains any consistency, it is but natural that members of our Association should stand in the foreground. The soil out of which it grows is modern society itself. It cannot be stamped out by any amount of carnage. To stamp it out, the Government would have to stamp out the despotism of capital over labour—the condition of their own parasitical existence.

(Marx, *Civil War in France*.)

But what is in question now is not the inevitable future collapse of Hitlerism. What matters now is the *speed* with which the international working class can gather its forces and drive back this offensive, before it has developed further, before it has developed to the point of world war and the direct attack on the Soviet Union, can prevent the enormous losses and sacrifices which a prolongation of this struggle will mean, and can rapidly transform the present situation to the revolutionary offensive.

THE continuance of Fascism in power depends on the maintenance of the disorganisation and division of the working class. It is just here that the rôle of Social Democracy remains of critical importance also after the accession of Fascism to power. The rôle of Social Democracy, and especially of the Social Democratic control of the trade unions—this is the weak point within the working-class army on which Fascism has continuously built in its rise to power and now continues to build after its accession to power. To draw to itself the Social Democratic leadership and especially the leadership of the trade unions now becomes the aim of Fascist policy. On the one hand, to smash and terrorise the

lower organisations of the workers ; on the other, to corrupt and win over the social democratic and trade union leadership, this is the method of Fascism to break the working class. And already the Social Democratic leadership is pressing forward to show its readiness to comply with this rôle. The same process that showed itself with D'Aragona and the the reformist trade union leadership in Italy rallying to Mussolini, with the reformist socialist and trade union leadership in Spain around Primo de Rivera, with the rallying in Bulgaria to Tsankov, and in Poland to Pilsudski, is now revealing itself with lightning speed also in Germany.

EVEN while the workers who have followed them are being harried and butchered by the Fascists, while their organisations are being broken up, while the local buildings of their party and of the trade unions are being sacked and destroyed, while the corpses are still unburied and the flames still burning, this leadership is seeking to curry favour with the Fascist masters, to vow their docility and to enter into their service. Noske writes to Goering to plead his services to the bourgeoisie and beg the continuance of his pension. Wels, as leader of Social Democracy making the official declaration of the party at the opening of the Reichstag—the only opportunity for any leader of the workers to make a public statement in Fascist Germany—uses this opportunity to pour out a stream of sickly servility : that this and that statement of the Chancellor is “ endorsed by Social Democrats ” ; that the next statement of the Chancellor is “ one to which we subscribe ” ; that he protests against “ exaggerated reports abroad ” ; that the Government needs to “ protect itself against crude excesses by its critics ” and must “ take strong measures ” ; that only Social Democracy has made possible the advent of Hitler, a working man, to power (“ we have helped to create a Germany in which the path to the leadership of the state is open not only to counts and barons, but to men of the working class ; you cannot go back on that without sacrificing your own leader ”), &c. Stampfer, the former Editor of *Vorwaerts*, writes in the bulletin of the party to

declare that "the victory of the Government parties makes it possible to govern strictly in accordance with the Constitution"; "they have only to act as a legal government, and it will follow naturally that we shall be a legal opposition; if they choose to use their majority for measures that remain within the framework of the Constitution, we shall confine ourselves to the rôle of fair critics." Kautsky writes ("What now? Reflections upon March 5th") that "the Dictatorship has the mass of the population behind it." Leipart officially on behalf of the Trade Union Federation writes to offer its services to the Government, "to be of service to the Government and Parliament through its knowledge and experience." The hordes of Social Democratic officials in the State and municipal offices, police presidents, &c., hasten to desert to the new masters. German Social Democracy passes out of the Second International in protest against the publication of "exaggerated accounts" critical of the Fascist régime, that is to say, demonstratively denies even the pretence of internationalism in order to win favour with National Fascism.

WHILE the Communist Party, against whom the main and heaviest attack of Fascism is directed, stands firm from top to bottom in face of all the terrorism, and is carrying forward its activities on an ever extended scale (as shown in the 300,000 sale of the first issue of the illegal "Rote Fahne," and in the big increases of the Red lists in such factory council elections as have been allowed to be held—since these victories, further factory council elections have been forbidden for six months), Social Democracy is going through a double process of disintegration above and below; below, it is either directly dissolving in the case of many local organisations, crumbling up or passing out of action, its best workers joining up with the Communist fight; above, it is either directly passing over to the enemy or preparing terms of agreement. In this way Social Democracy at once voluntarily dissolved all its supposed fighting organisations, Republican Banner Iron Front and the rest, as soon as the crisis for which they were supposed to have been formed arose.

In the same way Social Democracy has officially welcomed the appointment of Fascist Commissars over the trade unions, and is now offering the trade unions for a bargain with Fascism. The critical fight of the revolutionary workers at the present point becomes the fight to save the trade unions for the class struggle.

THE spectacle of this final fate of the once great party of German Social Democracy, the party originally led and virtually founded by Marx and Engels, is a merciless demonstration of political realities and of the inevitable outcome of the abandonment of the path of the revolutionary class struggle. What first appeared already in the nineteenth century as Opportunism, which Marx and Engels before their deaths directly condemned and called for the necessity of a split ; what developed in the first decade of the twentieth century as Social Imperialism ; what burst out in its full exposure in the betrayal of 1914 and the line of Social Patriotism ; what reached its supreme betrayal in the strangling of the workers' revolution in 1918-19 and the consistent building up of the counter-revolution ; this now reaches its inevitable culmination as it abandons, not only the struggle for socialism, but also the struggle for democracy, and merges into fascism. But this ignominious ending is in fact the culminating chapter of a party which has long had nothing in common with the succession of the old German Social Democracy. All that was living in the old German Social Democracy, its revolutionary traditions, its record of unbroken fights, its maintenance of the line of Marxism, passed over long since, already a decade and a half ago, with Liebknecht and Luxemburg and with half a million of the best social democratic workers, to the Communist Party.

WITH the downfall of German Social Democracy, the Second International and its partner, the Amsterdam Trade Union International, are inevitably dragged down. What remains of the Second International ? It is crumbling under the pressure of events. Its range

becomes even more limited to Western Europe, to the British-French Entente and satellite countries. French socialism goes through a parallel crisis and split, the majority passing over to voting the war credits already before the coming war. Of the reformist Trade Union International, Jouhaux, Secretary of the reformist Confédération Générale du Travail, writes in the Paris *Peuple* :

One may ask whether the Trade Union International will continue to exist or will disappear. Each day brings fresh news, but none of a comforting character. . . . One could have hoped that from the German working class, more powerfully organised than any other and free from a split of the trade unions, a gesture could have been forthcoming to save the honour of the German movement. There has been none.

THE collapse of 1914 is being repeated once more under new conditions. The meaning of this collapse should be pondered by every worker. 1914 already laid bare the bankruptcy of the whole line of social reformism. But large masses of workers still put their hopes anew in the promises of social reformism, of the "democratic path to socialism." Hence it was possible to create anew the post-war Second International. This new collapse demonstrates once more the emptiness of this path, and that the fight for socialism can only be conducted along the line of revolutionary Marxism, of Communism. *As we enter once more into a period of revolutionary conditions, when the working-class movement can only be carried forward under illegal conditions or go under the will o' the wisp lights of so-called "democratic socialism," that is, of "socialism by permission of the bourgeoisie," inevitably go into eclipse and leave the workers in the bog ; only the clear light of revolutionary socialism burns stronger than ever and shows the path forward.* It is no longer even in appearance a question of two tendencies, of two paths for the working-class struggle ; in the sight of all, the Communist International alone leads the working-class struggle.

EVEN the bourgeoisie cannot forbear to cast its scorn upon the decomposing corpse of Social Democracy, its faithful servant. The reactionary Paris organ, the *Temps*, now bought by the Comité des Forges, writes under the title "A Historic Collapse" :

Of all the great collapses of history that of German Social-Democracy to-day will live in the memory of generations as one of the most pitiful. German Social-Democracy ends without glory, and even without honour. . . .

One could hope that this will make our socialists more modest. One could hope that, before setting themselves up as censors of "bourgeois" thought and morality, they could turn their judgment on themselves. M. Blum could then explain to us poor "bourgeois" how in the very citadel of Marxism, in the sacred battalion of the Second International, no "revolutionary" could be found to accept the lot of a Delescluze or mount the barricades of a Baudin. . .

A democrat, even a "bourgeois" democrat, is a man who does not yield before oppression. A democrat is a man who does not salute Gessler's hat. This sentiment lives strongly in Frenchmen, the heirs of those bourgeois and workers who fought 1789, 1830 and February, 1848 ; it constituted the nobility, even in their errors, of the insurgents of June, 1848, and of 1871.

Such is the point of degradation reached of Social Democracy that this dishonest capitalist hack can actually taunt them with the forgotten memories of revolution ; can actually taunt them with the gibe that they, the bourgeoisie, low though they may have fallen, are at any rate higher than Social Democracy in this one respect, that they, the bourgeoisie, are revolutionary in comparison to Social Democracy, that they honour revolutionary traditions, that they can fight a revolution, that they can fight for their liberties. Such is the ironic reversal of rôles when the "party of order" can accuse Social Democracy of desertion even of the standards of the bourgeois revolution and of bourgeois democracy.

IN vain the remaining leaders of the Second International seek to shelve their responsibility and throw the blame on the seceding German Social Democracy for its surrender to Fascism. Only a short time back the leaders of the Second International were still repudiating with indignation the charge

of " Social Fascism " laid at their doors by the Communist International, as a " calumny," a " fantastic imagining," a wild and malicious confusion of contraries. To-day it is the leaders of the Second International, it is Vandervelde the Chairman, it is Adler the Secretary, who accuse German Social Democracy, the principal section of the Second International, of passing over to Fascism. Thus once again, as with every question and with every stage of development, as with rationalisation, as with the " American economic miracle," as with the prediction of the world economic crisis, as with the war question, so with Social Fascism, the mercilessly accurate diagnosis of the Communist International, which is at first dismissed on all sides as fantastic and baseless, is steadily day by day more and more completely confirmed by events, until at last it turns into the commonplace of all the wiseacres who first repudiated it with contempt. The Stockholm *Social-Demokraten*, the organ of the strongest parliamentary section of the Second International next to Germany, is compelled to write of Leipart's declaration :

These words can only mean that the trade union movement in Germany has adapted itself to the new political situation, and that it is not only ready to tolerate the new régime, but that it is even prepared to collaborate with the Hitler Government on certain questions. Thus Hitler obtained a very easy victory.

With deep sorrow in our hearts we have to admit this pliancy and yielding of the German trade union movement before its political enemies.

BUT in fact it is no break with the policy of the Second International, but on the contrary the direct continuation of the line of the Second International, that leads to the surrender and final merging into Fascism. Take the declaration of Leipart on behalf of the German Trade Union Federation :

The trade unions have come into being as the organised self-help of the working class ; and in the course of their history through natural causes have become more and more fused with the State itself.

The social tasks of the trade unions have to be fulfilled, no matter what the form of the State régime is . . .

The trade unions are fully prepared, even beyond the field of wages and working conditions, to enter into permanent co-operation with the employers' organisations.

A State supervision of such collaboration could in certain circumstances be conducive towards raising its value and rendering its execution more easy.

The trade unions do not claim to influence directly the policy of the State. Their tasks in this respect can only be to direct the just claims of the workers to the attention of the Government with reference to its measures of social and economic policy and legislation, and also to be of service to the Government and Parliament through its knowledge and experience in this field.

Is not this the very language of the entire reformist Trade Union International, of Citrine, of the Mondist line of co-operation with the employers and of trade union " participation " and " responsibility " in capitalist industry, of the whole Webb theory of trade unionism, of every reformist trade union official? The line of reformist trade unionism, of co-operation with capitalism and co-operation with the capitalist state, logically and inevitably works itself out to its completion as the line of Fascism. In vain the Citrines and Jouhaux seek to excuse themselves and to separate themselves from Leipart ; it is manifest to all that their policy is identical. The same outcome will inevitably follow in Britain, if the workers do not act in time. The profound lesson of this collapse must be learnt by every worker, by every trade unionist, by every socialist. Only the line of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition can save trade unionism ; only the line of the Communist International can lead the working-class struggle.

IT is in this situation that the British Labour Memorandum on Democracy and Dictatorship, in response to the urgent appeal for a united front to fight, the capitalist offensive and Fascism, touches the lowest depths. Even the bourgeois-liberal *New Statesman* and *Nation* is compelled to comment :

Leadership could scarcely fall lower than in the response to this crisis made by official British Labour. The Manifesto issued last

week-end by the National Joint Labour Council betrayed no realisation that the issue is the destruction of the working-class movement throughout Europe. . . . The Manifesto is void of international consciousness, and it makes no attempt to explain to the working class what the situation is or to put forward any policy of its own. It ignores the mass of discontent with existing leadership, and leaves the way open in every area for the spread of violent doctrine. If the "united front" is not the right policy for British Labour in the face of the Fascist reaction, then the only way of saving the unity of the movement is to explain why, and to offer some alternative plan of action.

The bourgeois liberals are compelled to remind the Labour leaders that they are supposed to concern themselves with the protection of the working class, and that if they thus abdicate and wash their hands of all responsibility in the face of direct menace, then this will inevitably lead to the recognition by the workers of Communism as the only leadership of their fight, "leaves the way open in every area for the spread of violent doctrine." This bourgeois liberal commentator sees plainly what these Labour leaders cannot see, or rather refuse to see and close their eyes to behind the mist of sermons, that "the issue is the destruction of the working-class movement throughout Europe." The Labour leaders remain blind to what all the world can see, not because they cannot see, are physically incapable of seeing, but because they cannot face it, because it cuts across all their "democratic" pretences and raises the plain issue of the class struggle, because they cannot meet it, they have no answer, they have no policy—save submission.

BECAUSE they have no policy for the workers, therefore they seek to hide their betrayal behind abstract general disquisitions about "democracy" and "dictatorship." To what end? It is obvious that for the Labour Party, which administers with despotic rule four hundred million colonial slaves without even the pretence of democratic forms, which imprisons sixty thousand Indians for the crime of demanding democratic rights, which smashes and splits the working-class organisations whenever a majority vote turns against them,

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for the Labour Party to speak of " democracy " is nothing but a stale and hypocritical pretence ; when they speak of " democracy " they mean it in a highly Pickwickian sense, in the sense of support of the bourgeois dictatorship, whatever its forms. But to what end these abstract disquisitions at the present point ? Let us imagine that the Labour Party has a love for democracy in the abstract as pure and unsullied as they would wish the workers to believe. What then ? To what does this lead in the present situation ? We are faced with a plain and urgent practical issue. The forms of democracy have been thrown aside by the bourgeoisie ; the trust of the workers in bourgeois democracy and legality has led to disaster ; the working-class movement is being broken up. What must be done ? What must be the answer of the workers ? How shall the workers protect themselves ? The Labour Party has no answer save to repeat a canticle on the praises of capitalist democracy. But it is the line of capitalist democracy that has led to the present outcome.

SINCE the formulas of " democracy " are thus revealed as incantations divorced from practice or from any practical bearing on the present situation, it follows that the only operative portion of the manifesto is the attack on Communism. The Labour Party refuses the united front of the working class, the united front with Communism, against Fascism. *But the Labour Party accepts the united front with the bourgeoisie against Communism.* In this way the Labour Party lines up with the bourgeoisie, and in practice with Fascism, that is, with the world-wide capitalist offensive against Communism, which is the heart of the present Fascist drive. The present urgent issue is the issue of Fascism in Germany and Central Europe. The workers are demanding what action is to be taken to defeat this offensive of Fascism. By the transparent trick of assimilating the Fascist dictatorship against the workers to Communism, that is, to proletarian democracy fighting for socialism (" against Dictators, Fascist or Communist "), the Labour Party seeks to turn the issue into an attack on Communism. Closely associated with this at

the same time comes the infamous war-provocation of the Labour Member of Parliament, Logan, in conjunction with the Conservative anti-Soviet campaign, directly inciting to war on the Soviet Union :

To him the Communist system was diabolical. It was antagonistic to the most progressive measures of mankind, and the sooner it was got rid of, the better. (D. G. Logan, Labour Member of Parliament, in the House of Commons debate on the Russian Imports Prohibition Bill : *Times* report, April 6, 1933.)

The language of this Labour spokesman is identical with the language of the most Catholic Christians, Hitler, Von Papen, and Goering, no less than of Churchill and the Foreign Office.

BY this manifesto the line of the Labour Party is revealed as identical with the line of German Social Democracy, the line, not merely of surrender, but of direct assistance to Fascism. Both reject the united working-class front ; both attack Communism ; both support their own bourgeoisie. The Labour Party still speaks in words against Fascism ; for Fascism is not yet the system of the British bourgeoisie ; and Chamberlain and Churchill also startle Europe by their vehement denunciations of Fascism, whereby they are only expressing the alarm of British imperialism at the too rapid revival of the defeated Prussian imperialism. German Social Democracy, on the other hand, adapts itself and is conciliatory to Fascism ; for the German bourgeoisie has adopted Fascism. *The difference is only on the surface ; the content is identical.* In the one case the system of the bourgeoisie is Fascism ; and German Social Democracy adapts itself to Fascism. In the other case the system of the bourgeoisie is bourgeois democracy (plus monarchy, aristocracy, high financial qualifications for parliamentary candidates, domination by armed force of the subject empire, &c.) ; and the Labour Party declares itself for bourgeois democracy (plus monarchy, aristocracy, high financial qualifications for parliamentary candidates, domination by armed force of the subject empire, &c.).

BUT the identity is even closer. For German Social Democracy actually defends its support of Fascism in the name of "democracy." "The dictatorship has the mass of the population behind it," declares Kautsky. "The election has shown," declares Stampfer, "that the German people to-day are divided into two approximately equal parts, of which one now seeks to govern, while the other must allow itself to be governed." And the British Labour Party directly endorses this argument, thus showing that the highly elastic conception of "democracy" can also be used to support Fascism. The Foreign editor of the *Daily Herald*, W. N. Ewer, writes in the Labour journal, the *Plebs*, April, 1933 :

The triumph of Hitler, everyone is saying, is a heavy defeat for democracy.

Yet it is really nothing of the kind. It is a victory of democracy, or at any rate, of demagoguery.

He (Hitler) has come to power by the most strictly constitutional means. He is Chancellor of Germany under the Weimar Constitution, and by virtue of the Weimar Constitution.

Of course there was a certain amount of intimidation at the elections. There always is. But it was under the circumstances curiously small. . . . The figures indeed are proof that the election was practically free.

This is a depth of degradation, of bootlicking to Fascism, not easy to beat. The victory of Fascism was thus, according to the Labour view, "a victory of democracy." There was a "certain amount of intimidation at the elections," but "curiously small." The complete suppression of the Communist and Social Democratic press ; the arrest of the entire body of Communist deputies ; the raids on Communist and Social Democratic buildings ; the armed occupation of the Communist headquarters ; the suppression of all freedom of speech and meeting ; the beating up and imprisonment of thousands of the most active Communist and Social Democratic workers ; all this is a "curiously small" amount of "intimidation at the elections." "The election was practically free." Such is the Labour Party conception of "democracy." The meaning of the antithesis of "democracy" and

Communism is thus made clearer ; since the line of " democracy " is revealed as the line of subservience to Fascism, exactly as with German Social Democracy.

FASCISM, argues the Labour Manifesto, is the consequence of Communism (" Reaction of the ' Left ' is displaced by triumphant reaction of the ' Right ' "). The exact contrary is the case. The examples are now sufficient to make certain a generalisation beyond the possibility of dispute. Where the majority of the working class has followed the line of Communism (the Soviet Union), Fascism has not been able to appear. Where the majority of the working class has followed the line of Reformism (Germany, Italy, &c.), there at a certain stage Fascism invariably grows and conquers. This stage arises when the working class movement has grown to a point of strength where it should advance to the seizure of power, when the bankruptcy of the old régime is revealed, but the working class is held in by reformist leadership. In that case, owing to the failure of decisive working-class leadership to rally all discontented strata, the discredited old régime is able to draw to its support under specious quasi-revolutionary slogans all the wavering elements, petit-bourgeoisie, backward workers, &c., and on the very basis of the crisis and discontent which should have given allies to the revolution, build up the forces of reaction in the form of Fascism ; the continued hesitation and retreat of the reformist working-class movement at each point encourages the growth of Fascism ; and on this basis Fascism finally steps in and seizes the reins, not through its own strength, but through the failure of working-class leadership. The collapse of bourgeois democracy is succeeded, not by the advance to proletarian democracy, but by the regression to Fascist dictatorship. In 1925 we wrote of Fascism (Notes, July, 1925) :

Fascism arises where a powerful working-class movement reaches a stage of growth which inevitably raises revolutionary issues, but is held in from decisive action by reformist leadership. . . . Fascism is the child of Reformism.

The example of Germany has demonstrated this whole process on a more complete scale than ever before. It is urgently to be hoped that this culminating and costly example will be sufficient for the workers of the whole world, and that the workers in Britain will be able in time to free themselves from the line of the Labour Manifesto, which can only lead to the same outcome.

THE direct responsibility of Social Democracy in Germany for the growth and victory of Fascism is manifest to all. It was Social Democracy that consciously and deliberately destroyed the German workers' revolution, disarmed the workers, broke up the workers' and soldiers' councils, handed over the power to the bourgeoisie and armed the reaction. It was Social Democracy that led the workers away from socialism along the fatal line of co-operation with capitalism in the economic and political fields, of faith in rationalisation and organised capitalism, that rejected the united working-class front, and broke up the power of the trade unions by wholesale expulsions of all militant elements and sections. It was Social Democracy that placed Hindenburg in power, that supported the suppression of democracy, that taught the "toleration" of the emergency presidial régime under which Fascism was built up. It was Social Democracy that, when the direct attack and coup finally began in July, 1932, with Von Papen and the dictatorial removal of the Social Democratic Government in Prussia, refused once again the united front, warned the workers against any attempt at resistance, and bade them place their entire confidence in Social Democracy in the Republican banner and in the Iron Front to protect the Constitution. Even up to the last, after the nomination of Hitler, Social Democracy rejected the ever more urgent proposals of the Communist Party for a united front to defeat Fascism, and instead in its Manifesto of January 31st warned the workers against "undisciplined action"; "Rally, therefore, to the Iron Front! Obey its orders and its alone!" Within a few weeks the Iron Front was voluntarily dissolved by the Social Democratic leadership without having attempted

a gesture of resistance. With the Fascist dictatorship finally established, Social Democracy now preaches the necessity of submission (the people "must allow itself to be governed"), warns against "senseless adventures" of attempting resistance (Kautsky), and hastens along the path of conciliation with Fascism (Leipart, Wels).

THE refusal of the united working-class front by the Second International at the present moment is a historic crime. In the past the Second International has often expressed its suspicions of the united front as a "manœuvre." What, then, are we to say of the Manifesto of the Second International of February 19th, which spoke of "working-class unity," of "common action"; "we call upon the German workers, the workers of all countries, to cease their attacks upon each other and to join together in the fight against Fascism." Yet so soon as the Communist International and the Communist Parties come forward with concrete proposals for common action against Fascism, together with complete abstention from attacks during such common action, the immediate reply is a direct refusal, not a refusal of one or another particular proposal as unsuitable or needing modification, but a direct and blunt refusal of any common action at all. We think the workers will judge where lies the sincerity and the seriousness in the workers' struggle, and will go forward with the united front none the less, in the face of all those who seek to sabotage it.

THE issues which are confronting us at the present moment are heavy issues. Fascism in Germany lays bare to all where capitalist civilisation is inevitably developing, if the workers' revolution is delayed. Germany is not a backward country (as the leaders of the Second International, Vandervelde and Bauer, until recently tried to argue that "dictatorship" could only arise in "backward countries," and that "democracy" was the inevitable form in "advanced industrial countries"). Germany is the most advanced, highly organised capitalist country in the world, the last word,

which shows to other countries the picture of their future development. What is that picture of the future of capitalism thus revealed? Barbarism and the return of the Dark Ages; the systematic destruction of all science and culture; the enthronement of Catholic Christian obscurantism, racial persecution and torture systems; the return to a system of isolated, self-sufficient warring communities. This is the final working out of the most advanced capitalism, with the Pope conferring his blessing upon it and decorating the murderer Goering with his Gold Medal of the Holy Year. Marx and Engels long ago pointed out the inevitable working out of capitalism in barbarism and decay, if the working-class revolution should fail to conquer in time. Stage by stage, through imperialism and its world orgies of brutality and destruction, through the slaughter of the world war, and to-day through Fascism, we are tasting the first beginnings of this alternative. It is time to end this chapter, before we have to tread this path still further, and to open the new one. Only the working-class revolution can save humanity, can carry humanity forward, can organise the enormous powers of production that lie ready to hand. We must build the united working-class front to defeat the offensive of Fascism; only the united working-class front can defeat the offensive of Fascism. The victory of the united working-class front leads the way forward to the victory of the workers' revolution.

R. P. D.

NEW EVENTS IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

By JOHN A. MAHON

THE sharpening of the crisis and the intensification of the class struggle is being reflected in profound changes which are taking place in the British trade union movement, changes which themselves become a further factor in the intensification of the struggle. A new revolt of the trade union masses is developing, a revolt directed against the whole reformist official policy of subordinating the unions to the interests of the employers, a revolt of the membership masses which goes on the line of transforming the trade union branch, the traditional place where the workers take their decisions and organise to carry them out, into an organ of class struggle. This new revolt embodies the advance of whole masses of the trade union membership on the line of independent leadership of their own struggle, independent of the central reformist leadership of the unions.

The most advanced examples of these new movements are the London Busmen's Rank-and-File Movement and the National All-Grades Railwaymen's Vigilance Movement. Both of these movements represent the joint action of a number of trade union branches in the preparation and leadership of the masses of workers in the industry in the economic struggle. The Busmen's Movement has already attracted the attention and won the admiration of large numbers of workers by its signal victory in September, 1932, when it forced Lord Ashfield to withdraw his wage-cut proposals, and in January, 1933, when at the head of 13,000 strikers it forced the withdrawal of the speed schedules at Forest Gate and held up the general speed policy of the combine. The Railwaymen's movement has not yet endured the fiery test of action, but there is every indication that it will very shortly be called upon to do so.

What is new in these movements? What is their significance in the struggle between reformist and revolutionary trade unionism in Britain? What have the trade unionists in other industries to learn from them?

The new content of these movements, the content which has enabled them to develop from one issue to another, to establish themselves as permanent organised oppositions to the reformist leadership consists in the following :

- (i) They are based upon trade union branches and depots.
- (ii) These branches have been won for the line of branch activity on immediate questions.
- (iii) These movements take up, through the branches, the continuous struggle on wages and economic issues.
- (iv) The leadership of these movements consists of broad elected organs, responsible to the branches, which take on their own shoulders all the responsibilities of the work.
- (v) They have drawn into activity (committees, speakers, editorial work, worker correspondents, &c.) large numbers of the active trade unionists, and are developing political discussions among these active supporters.
- (vi) They have developed a mass press, written and edited and read by workers in the industry.

These factors are all present in the Busmen's and Railmen's movements and in contrast are not present in a number of other movements, for example, the Port Workers' Unity Movement and the A.E.U. Members' Rights Movement which have not yet developed beyond an initial stage.

In the March issue of the *Railway Vigilant*, the monthly printed organ of the Railwaymen's Vigilance Movement, is to be found a vivid picture of this movement which graphically illustrates the new character of this movement compared with previous forms of opposition movements. It must be remembered that this paper is written and edited and financed entirely by railwaymen, sells 12,000 copies, and that its editorial committee examines and passes every word that goes in.

The March *Railway Vigilant* contains the following :

- 6 *short articles* (Irish Strike and Morris Wage Cuts ; Report of Vigilance Correspondent in Belfast Strike ; Rail Electrification ; Accidents ; August, 1914, Again ; Karl Marx).
- 15 *Reports of activity in depots* (showing the activity of the Vigilance Movement on such questions as overtime, transfers, rationalisation, Irish goods embargo, cases of a 16-hour day, fight against attempted discharge of coal tippers, strengthening of trade union organisation, unity of locomen, holding up a train with Irish bound goods for several hours, collection of £30 at one depot for the Irish strikers, and so on).
- 9 *Letters from T.U. branches* sending their resolutions for publication.
- 7 *Letters from rail correspondents* dealing with events in their depots.
- Details of 41 contributions to the Fighting Fund*, totalling £17 os. 8d.
- Reports of 3 District Conferences* of the Vigilance Movement.

This gives a picture of the most widespread kind of activity in which the immediate issues are being taken up on the job and brought into the branch rooms for discussion and action.

The extent of the movement can be gauged from the list of places from which the contents of this issue are made up : Belfast, Willesden, King's Cross, Wood Green, Forest Gate, Bricklayers' Arms, Derby, Cricklewood, Stockport, Nottingham, Wigan, West Riding, London Underground, Newcastle, Carlisle, Warrington, Eastleigh, Stratford, Manchester, Salford, Darlington, Bradford, Glasgow, Rose Grove, Birmingham, Eastfield.

Such a paper, and the movement it reflects, constitutes an absolutely new achievement in the history of the revolutionary trade union movement in Britain. And the same can be said of the *Busmen's Punch*, the organ of the London Busmen.

Right in the centre of the new character of these movements is the fact that they are based upon the activation of the trade union branches, by the bringing into the branch rooms of the struggle on the job and the winning of the branch for militant activity around job issues. This is the essential lesson for the trade unionists in the other industries who are seeking the way to build similar movements in the fight against wage cuts and rationalisation.

These movements direct their policy sharply against both the employers and the reformist union leadership. The London Busmen's Rank-and-File Movement especially demonstrates that large masses of the trade unionists, numbers of trade union branches, understand perfectly well *that in order to fight successfully against the capitalist attacks it is necessary to fight also against the reformist leaders and their policy of collaboration with the employers*. This is the essential political content which determines the character of these movements, which brings them into line with the revolutionary movement of the working class against capitalism and reformism. It is this which enables us to describe these movements as the first mass forms of the revolutionary trade union opposition in this country. We say the first forms, because it is clear that the great majority of the workers who form these movements are not yet won for the revolutionary platform of the Red International of Labour Unions and its British section, the National Minority Movement, as opposed to the Yellow Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. But they have taken long strides along the road in this direction, and each new struggle which they participate in will bring new understanding and appreciation of the full revolutionary trade union line.

The supporters of the R.I.L.U. have already taken their full share of activity in these movements, but it is necessary to do more. It is necessary both to give leadership and strength to the existing movements and to work to create the basis for bringing them into touch with one

another and for unifying them into a united movement comprising all the militant forces in the trade union movement and on the job.

This means particularly work in the other industries in order to develop movements of the type of the Bus and Rail movements. It means developing militancy in the factories, developing groups of the rank-and-file and during the struggles setting up elected factory leaderships. It means bringing the unorganised workers into the unions and extending into the unorganised factories the principles and practice of militant trade unionism.

The preparation of the masses for the economic struggles, the leadership of the economic struggles with the utmost tenacity in order to win economic gains for the workers, and the political enlightenment of the experience of the workers during the struggle for partial demands are powerful factors in the work of developing these rank-and-file movements into a revolutionary trade union opposition.

In the partial struggles the workers find themselves in conflict with all the forces of capitalism, with the reformist leaders playing a special rôle in the interests of the capitalists. In these struggles the workers learn that the State, the press, the employers and the reformist leaders are all allies in the wage-cutting process. They get practical lessons about the use of violence, about class solidarity, about the impartiality of the State, and many other basic political questions. All this experience must be discussed in the rank-and-file movements, and the revolutionary trade unionists supporting the R.I.L.U. must help the wide masses to draw the correct conclusions from this experience and in this way prepare the masses in these movements for entering the ranks of the Red International of Labour Unions, the trade union International based on the platform of the class struggle.

In the course of this revolutionary work in the trade unions it is necessary to make special efforts to win for the rank-and-file movement the extremely large number of branch and district officials and committeemen and of the elected members of national committees of the unions who are gravely dissatisfied with the policy of class collaboration which is now plainly weakening and threatening to wreck entirely the trade unions. The part which the branch and district officials are playing already in the development of the bus and rail movement, shows that a large number of them are ready to make a new fight for the principles of trade unionism against those who are abandoning these principles in the interests of the capitalists.

In other industries there is clearly mass militancy just as great as among the bus and railwaymen. This particularly has been shown in such events as the Ryhope strike and the Bedwas strike of the miners.

The trade unionists in this and other industries must ask themselves the question "Why is it that while the London Busmen can come together, develop their own leadership, win their trade union branches for the struggle, and score big economic successes against the capitalists, that nothing similar has yet been done in the M.F.G.B.?" All the possibilities exist for the development of powerful movements in the other industries. What is necessary is that the revolutionary workers should not only applaud the success of the London busmen but also should understand how this new movement has been developed and should then work in similar manner, taking up the immediate questions of the struggle on wages and working conditions, activating their trade union branches on these questions, and thus laying the basis for the joining together of the branches and the development of mass movement.

THE FORD STRIKERS WIN A VICTORY

By C. BERRIDGE

THE “impregnable” Dagenham fortress of the great and powerful Mr. Henry Ford has fallen before the united fighting front of the workers.

The Ford firm renowned internationally for their “open shop” policy, for their brutal and peremptory dismissals of workers by the thousand, for their slavish conveyor and lines system of rationalised production, have been forced to retreat before the splendid demonstration of militancy of their 7,000 workers at the Dagenham factory.

Efforts made over a period to impose cuts in wages varying from 1d. to 1s. per hour and more, had met with success in a number of departments representing semi-skilled and unskilled labour until it came to the toolroom, when events began to move with amazing rapidity.

The response of the skilled men was a meeting of 400 out of approximately 700 toolroom workers, held on the Sunday morning of March 26th in Barking Park, and a decision to meet the wage cut demand with strike action. The programme of demands formulated at this meeting became the fighting platform of the whole of the Ford workers.

- (1) The restoration of all wage cuts introduced since the 10 per cent. cut of Easter, 1932.
- (2) Official recognition of the Trade Unions.
- (3) No victimisation.

Lest the foregoing should convey the impression that the whole movement was spontaneous let it be understood that an active and militant Trade Union committee had carried on consistent agitation and propaganda from outside the factory over a very long period holding special meetings of Trade Union members at Ford's, &c., and that a group of militant Trade Unionists had worked deliberately and systematically inside the works preparing for such an attack as was made by Ford on March 26th.

It is not by chance that the initiative was taken by the skilled workers for it was the only department which had any semblance of Trade Union organisation and therefore *the section of workers most easily accessible in an organised way to the influence of the militants not only immediately but over a period.*

Mass picketing and the solidarity appeal of the skilled workers to the Sunday night and early Monday morning shifts met with 100 per cent.

support despite the fact that of the 7,000 workers at Ford's only the 400 who attended the Barking Park meeting knew there was a strike on or what it was about.

Hundreds of workers who knew nothing of the merits or demerits of the dispute joined the picket line, which goes to prove the seething discontent and will to struggle of the masses.

Mass meetings (which were held frequently during the whole course of the strike) speedily acquainted all the affected workers with the true significance of the situation and resulted in a consolidation of the strikers' ranks and the endorsement of the fighting programme of demands.

Strike organisation was extremely weak throughout the whole period of the dispute, the strike committee in particular being, in the early stages, of an unrepresentative character, first from the standpoint of departmental representation and secondly from the standpoint of the overwhelming majority of the unorganised workers.

The fact that the strike committee was predominantly constituted of organised Trade Union workers resulted in an insistence upon the principle of Trade Union recognition to the point which threatened to split the united fighting front of the workers.

The management of Ford's appreciated this weakness and from the very beginning by devious means endeavoured to drive a wedge between the strikers and the strike leadership as represented in the Strike Committee.

On the Monday of March 27th, not only was an effort made to bribe the workers to blackleg by offering a full day's pay to any worker who came in and worked the unexpired period of his shift, but a statement was issued by the management, declaring their readiness to "consider" meeting a deputation of six Ford workers without a Trade Union official being present if the names and badge numbers were handed in at the gate.

This imperial gesture of the management was turned down with a resounding thump by the strikers' mass meeting, but was very soon followed by further manœuvres of the management that exposed their whole line.

Overtures made to the Strike Committee by Mr. Atkins (Secretary to the Chairman of the Ford European Co., Sir Percival Perry) in person on Monday evening, resulted in his questioning the authority of the Strike Committee.

An invitation extended to him to speak to the men from the same platform as the Chairman of the Strike Committee for himself was accepted, in order to test the strikers feelings, but it resulted in a unanimous vote of confidence for the Committee.

His main line of attack was supplemented by a strengthening of the police force in evidence at the factory gates, through publication of obviously inspired reports of breakaways and departmental settlements in the capitalist Press.

But with all the votes at the mass meetings and the unanimous support for the programme of demands it became abundantly clear on the second day of the strike that a powerful under-current was at work.

Deputations, and in some cases whole departments, approached the Strike Committee, pressing for representation on the Committee, demanding to know why negotiations were not opened up.

Workers gathered in groups and declarations could be heard to the effect that the "Trade Unions were hoping to rake in a few thousand members out of this," "We should be worse off on Trade Union rates," &c., and as these arguments were dealt with and disposed of, the real problem came to the surface. The demand for Trade Union recognition and the insistence, under the leadership of the Strike Committee, upon Jack Tanner accompanying any deputation to the Ford's Management, *represented Trade Union intervention in the dispute as a stumbling block, a barrier, standing in the way of a successful settlement of the dispute.*

The decisive influence of the militant Trade Unionist on the Strike Committee and the application of a militant Trade Union line drew the whole forces of the workers together.

Insistence upon the Union Organisers being with the deputation was withdrawn, and a deputation consisting of Trade Unionist and Non-Unionist Ford workers was elected with power to discuss anything but finally accept nothing.

Further to this, emphasis was laid upon the need of maintaining the Strike Committee as a Works Committee upon the return to work, as the surest guarantee that the terms of settlement would not be abrogated.

Thus Trade Union intervention was clearly presented, not in the light of a stumbling block, not as an "outside" organisation coming in for what it could get out of the dispute in the shape of members, but as a workers' organisation lending assistance to workers in struggle, supporting them, serving them, with the one objective in view—*to win the strike.*

The victory which resulted from this historic struggle is now well known.

The principle of collective bargaining has been established contrary to the whole line of Ford policy and against their will.

Basic hourly minimum rates applicable to clearly defined grades of labour have been forced on the management and the Strike Committee

maintains its existence as a Works Committee, pursuing an aggressive line, taking up the day to day grievances with the management, &c.

The Ford strike is a complete vindication, if such were needed, of the line of militant Trade Unionism.

The example of Ford's has inspired similar action at Briggs' Bodies works, a subsidiary of Ford's, at Venestas, of Silvertown, and many other places.

Already the lessons of the Ford strike and the intensive activity preceding it is being taken up and applied by an Area Committee representing eleven A.E.U. Branches in West London.

A concerted attack has been launched against Messrs. Luvax, which is operating the infamous Bedaux system, under the title of the Luvax Point system, with a view of developing action against its continued operation.

The Trade Union formalism and sectarianism which has held back the development of the R.T.U.O. (Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition) in the metal industry must now end, in view of this brilliant example of correct methods of work.

Abstract and academic arguments on the York memorandum must give place to active work in the Trade Union Branches, converting them into strongholds of militant Trade Unionism, drawing them into agitation and work at, and in, the factories, combining the activity of Union men in the factory with agitation from outside, initiated by the militant Union Branches.

With the development of rank and file initiative in the factories and the Trade Union Branches, the seething discontent in the factories can be transformed into mass struggle against the offensive of capitalism on the wage standards and working conditions of the engineering workers.

Through the development of rank and file initiative under the inspiration and leadership of the militant Trade Unionists, there can speedily be built up and developed a mass rank and file opposition movement in the metal Trade Unions.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINES

By A SOUTH AFRICAN WORKER

ONE of the most exploited workers of South Africa, one of the most oppressed and enslaved, are the mine workers, working on the Rand gold mines and various copper, tin and other mines of South Africa. The conditions prevailing in these mines are terrible. The sjamboking and beating; the rotten food; the dirty overcrowded compounds; the imposition of heavy fines for every nonsense; the terrible heat underground; the frequent accidents and without any compensation; compulsory Sunday work, all illustrate the general conditions prevailing in the mines at the present time.

Yet, hundreds of thousands of Native peasants have been recruited for the mines, and every year thousand upon thousands of new recruits are filling the depot centres of the Witwaterstand Native Labour Association (the Chamber of Mines recruiting organisation) at Johannesburg, Witbank, Breyton and other places of South Africa, and the question inevitably arises: What are the reasons, that in spite of the wretched conditions, in spite of the terrible exploitation prevailing on the mines, thousands and tens of thousands of peasants are streaming from all parts of South Africa to the various mining industries and especially to the gold mines on the Rand (in December, 1932, 221,008 natives were employed on the gold mines; 11,310 on the coal mines, and 475 on other mines of the Transvaal)?

Forcing the Peasants into the Mines.

It is because actually these peasants are being *forced* to go to the mines by an exertion of an "economic pressure," *i.e.*, by applying to the native peasants various methods of oppression and exploitation.

Imperialism, in order to be able to get an adequate supply of cheap native labour for the mines, farms and plantations, has invented various methods by which to drive the natives to the Labour centres. By various kinds of taxation, by expropriating them of their land and with the aid of cunning recruiters, they were, and still are, able to drive the native peasants "voluntarily" to the mines, farms and other labour centres. Let us go into this matter a little more deeply.

According to the Land Act of 1913, any native is prohibited from purchasing land except in native areas, which means that they are prohibited from purchasing land in 92 per cent. of the total area of the

Union (less than 12 per cent. are Native Reserves and cannot, therefore, be purchased or sold). It also prohibits new agreements whereby natives could secure the use of land by payment of rent. Thus the Government has driven the native to live on only 20 per cent. of the total area of the Union. Mainly out of these native reserves native labour is being recruited for the mines, &c.

There are no recent statistics about the native population of the Union, the 1931 census was taken of the European population only, for "economy reasons," but 1926 figures taken from an article by Prof. Macmillan will do if only we remember that since then considerable changes for the worse have taken place. It will prove to us that these reserves were, right from the beginning, put aside only to be reservoirs of cheap native labour for the European farmers, plantation owners and mine magnates.

In the Transvaal reserves the native population was in 1926 about 363,000 and the area upon which this population lives (and now a larger population lives) was only 3,837 square miles out of a total of 110,540 square miles. In the Orange Free State the position is still worse. The native population there in 1926 was 440,000 and the area upon which they were supposed to live was 244.3 square miles.

In the Transkei the position is still worse. Figures could be given in plenty illustrating the conditions in the Reserves. Even in the Protectorates, where one imagines them to be purely native territories, most of the land belongs to Europeans, not mentioning even many districts with vast areas of land, huge native populations and with *no* Reserves at all.

This is the main cause of the adequate and "voluntary" influx of native labour to the mines, farms and plantations, the other one is taxation.

A semi-hypocritical report of the Native Economic Commission recently issued states :

In the past difficulty has been experienced in attaining a sufficient supply of labour for the industries of the country. The native in a tribal reserve accustomed to a subsistence economy, having under the European rule, peace with plenty (?), (except in a bad crop season), felt no urge to go out to labour. Not accustomed to anything more than his simple wants of tribal life, he had really no incentive to work for more. The European Government wanting labour for their industries, decided to bring pressure to bear on the native to force him to come out to work, and did this by imposing taxes.

Thus we see that since they lived "happily," taxation was supposed to become, as indeed it did become, that force and power which should stop this "peace in plenty" and drive the native peasants in their thousands to slave in the mines, farms and plantations for nothing.

And taxation is really a tremendous driving force which does "bring pressure to bear and forces him to come out and work." If we take even a "well-to-do" farmer who possesses a six acre plot (Isikonkwani), we see at once his desperate position. The rainfall allows only one crop to be grown on such a small piece of land, and maize as the staple crop, is being grown. The *best* season is capable of giving a *maximum* crop of only 30 (thirty) bags. A bag of maize is worth now about 5s. or 6s., that is £7 10s. od. or £9 os. od. for thirty bags a year. Out of this money the peasant must live, buy clothing, pay taxation, &c. I believe I am spared the trouble of saying anything about those who do not possess land at all. It must only be mentioned that a European farmer, with a 2,000 or 3,000 morgen¹ plot who does not pay income tax, escapes direct taxation, while a native with no plot at all *must* pay £1 os. od. in Poll Tax, 10s. if he stays in a hut, and in some reserves there is an additional dipping tax from 5s. as well.

And now come the recruiters, often as a trader who gives the final push.

When the reaping season comes the magistrate compels the natives to pay their taxes knowing well enough that they have no cash to pay (the traders do not pay them cash but exchange their crop for other goods). After a short time the native peasant must buy the maize again, his own maize perhaps, from the traders on credit, till he is hopelessly in debt. Then the trader (who is also a recruiter) comes along and either takes away the peasant's cattle or forces him to go to the mines in order to pay off his debts. Thus in most cases the miners work mainly for the traders and tax collectors.

This is how the Government is exercising an "economic pressure" in order to drive the native peasants to work for nothing for the European plantation owners, landlords and mine magnates.

What are the conditions of the miners in the Rand gold mines, where the majority of the peasants go?

Working Conditions in the Mines.

The conditions in the mines have become intolerable. First of all the expenses of the recruits who come from the reserves to the mines are paid by themselves. At the recruiting depot they are then examined and . . . their finger prints are taken. When there is no vacant place in any of the mines, they are then declared as being "unfit" and, of course, are *not* paid for the time they wait for their turn, until there is a vacant place when they suddenly become fit and are then sent down.

When in the mine it is still worse. The filthy compounds are not equipped with beds and mattresses, and the miners are compelled to

¹A morgen is equivalent to 2.12 acres.

sleep on the bare floor ; the food is rotten, cold and not enough (the food ration per man per day is 24 ounces of maize (mealie meal), six ounces of bread, three ounces of beans or peas a day, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound of meat *per week*, and tea or coffee) ; the miners have to get up at 2.30 a.m. ; at 3 o'clock they start going down. At a certain station underground they are given a little ration of sour maize, and with this little food they must work *continuously without a break for dinner* the whole time till they come up at 4.30 p.m. and later. The kitchen accommodation is so bad that the miner very often stands in a line till six o'clock and even later until he gets his miserable ration of food. The average wages of a miner is now ranging from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 8d. per day. The heat underground is terrible, heat strokes occur very often, and in such a heat the miners are driven to work continuously without even a drink of water (water is unhealthy to drink because it results in a loss of chlorida, but the water can be mixed with salt and then it is all right for drinking). Proper ventilation underground does not exist in many cases, and it is almost impossible to breathe, but the miners must lie on their backs in this devil's hole and drill with heavy jack hammers ; sometimes they must stand days in water for the whole day. Their feet become sore from the sharp rocks and from standing continuously in water, while the white overseers stand in dry places with rubber top boots. For every offence they are beaten and sjamboked murderously, and heavily fined. Accidents occur very often, by the falling of rocks, by gassing, &c., but no compensation is paid to them and while in hospital they don't even get their ordinary wages. The "recreation" in the mines include very often tribal wars fomented by the mine bosses in order to split the ranks of the workers and in order to draw away their attention from the rotten conditions in the mines.

Recent Struggles and their Lessons.

Chauvinism is rampant in the South African Labour Movement. No party in this movement except the Communist Party has ever even opened its doors to any Black South African worker. The Communist Party alone has attempted to take part in these miners' struggles for their elementary needs. The 221,000 Black miners of the Rand gold mines and the tens of thousands of workers in the other mines of the Union, constitute a tremendous revolutionary force against imperialism. The Communist Party is confronted with the colossal task of harnessing this revolutionary force, of organising the miners, of winning over the majority of them on the basis of their daily grievances, for the overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of an Independent Native Republic—a workers' and peasants' government in South Africa.

The experience the Communist Party has gained by its work in the mines is still very small. Owing to lack of experience and lack of sufficient forces, the immense majority of the miners are still left unorganised.

Work has to be carried on under completely illegal conditions which naturally hampers activity. But gradually the influence of the Party is growing and now, on the basis of the day-to-day demands, more and more miners are being drawn into the fight against the rotten conditions in the mines.

A short time before Dingann's Day (the 16th of December²) attempts were made to organise the miners to fight against the rotten conditions in the mines by declaring a strike on that day. That attempt was not successful, firstly because of the short time available, but mainly because of inexperience and lack of proper knowledge as to how to organise the miners, how to approach them properly, how to imbue them with confidence in an organised struggle. In the attempt to organise them and call them out on strike many mistakes were committed, which now it is possible, more or less, to detect and analyse.

One of the most important reasons for the failure was the lack of proper organisation of the strike. The strike was called before it was properly organised. First of all, too much reliance was placed on irresponsible and unreliable comrades who, afterwards, at the last moment sabotaged the strike (City Deep): neither the groups of the Communist Party or of the African Federation of Trade Unions were organised on a shaft basis (City Deep), a mistake of tremendous importance. The Shangaan workers were not drawn into the Communist Party groups, thus cutting the majority of the Shangaan workers out of the strike, for although leaflets were printed in the Shangaan language and distributed among them, no verbal propaganda had been carried on, and also no organisational work among the Shangaan workers in their own language. This left a considerable portion of the mine workers quite unorganised, in this way splitting indirectly the ranks of the workers. These are the organisational mistakes as far as the calling of the strike was concerned.

Now, after further analysis, more mistakes and shortcomings can be detected which would have caused perhaps a defeat of the strike, even if the strike had been successfully called. Although the Communist Party knew that if the strike would come off, police and perhaps civil gangs would be there to drive the workers back to work at the point of the revolver, nevertheless, no attempt was made to organise defence committees which would be able to defend the workers from the attack of the police; nor was any attempt made to establish a strikers' fund which should have been available before the strike. Under such circumstances the election of a strike committee would have been impossible.

Another mistake, which is of tremendous importance, was the failure to train an independent leadership among the miners—independent of

²The day on which South African whites celebrate as the completion of their victory over the blacks, a day on which in the last few years counter-demonstrations against imperialism have been organised.

the immediate help of the outside members of the Communist Party, capable of leading the struggle of the miners.

Further, the strike was not organised or propaganda work carried through on a proper illegal basis. The distribution of leaflets was carried through openly in the Compound (by openly I mean that it was given to every miner without regard to what he might be), &c.

Also the racial illfeeling existing between the various nationalities was not combated sufficiently, especially the so-called inferiority theory about the Shangaan worker.

These are the mistakes and shortcomings, or to say it more correctly, these were the mistakes and shortcomings which were made during a short period of activity on the mines.

The Communist Party is confronted with a programme of work gained by its experience during their activity on the mines, which is already considerable. By analysing these mistakes it is now possible to state that the following points are of the most vital immediate importance:

1. First of all it has become clear that it is dangerous to call a strike when the workers are not thoroughly prepared for it. In making preparations for strike action, an extensive propaganda must be carried through orally and by issuing various publications; leaflets, pamphlets and a miners' Magazine which should contain popular articles on the conditions in the mines, workers' correspondence, &c., &c. The whole trade union and Communist Party organisations must be put on a shaft basis. This would enable a more efficient struggle to be carried on with the bosses on the basis of the daily grievances of the miners, and also to have a more direct approach to the individual workers, thus enabling the workers to become more thoroughly organised. It is of vital importance that all nationalities are drawn into the struggle, to form a united fighting front of Shangaans, Basutos, Xosas, Zulus, and workers of other races, for in this way only will it be possible to combat the tribal wars and to unite the ranks of the workers. It is of the utmost importance that a strikers' fund should be available *before* the strike begins, because once the strike begins the mine magnates will no doubt stop the provision to the compounds of even the wretched food the workers get in "normal" times.

Under the present conditions where mass meetings of miners are hard to convene and in most cases almost impossible, the election of strike committees or even committees of action are not always possible by a democratic vote. This confronts the revolutionary workers with the task of finding a way how best in a given situation, to carry through an election of a committee of action or strike committee without appointing it from above.

2. To transform the spontaneous strikes which take place from time to time in the mines into a class-conscious struggle of the workers against the rotten conditions in the mines, leading up to a general miners' strike, is of vital importance. To achieve this an independent Communist leadership within the mines and compounds must be trained. The training of miners from the compound means the enlightening of the miners, means the ultimate winning over of the majority of the miners and means, therefore, a hard blow to imperialism.

3. Complete illegality must be the basis of all work on the mines (this, of course, does not exclude taking advantage of any possibility of carrying on open propaganda). The huge profits the mine magnates derive out of the inhuman exploitation of the mine workers will not stop them from bribing the necessary authorities and from applying all legal and even illegal, from a bourgeois point of view, means of suppression in order to continue the inhuman exploitation. No avenue will be left unutilised in order to suppress and prevent from coming out on the surface the action of the miners, for the sake of the stock exchange and Kaffir shares. The mines are of tremendous importance to the revolutionary movement, and cannot be trifled with.

4. The Communist Party must prove itself to be strong enough to lead the workers, and in a convincing manner to combat their prejudices. A struggle must be carried on against the theory of the so-called inferiority of the Shangaan workers and against all the other prejudices of the workers which have been bred and fostered by the imperialists, in order to split the ranks of the workers and develop their prejudices into tribal wars and other counter-revolutionary fights, which carry away the revolutionary energy into counter-revolutionary channels.

The struggle of the miners must be carried on, on the basis of their general and immediate demands. These demands are :

- (1) 6s. a day as a minimum wage.
- (2) An 8-hour working day, including the time the miners go down to work and come up.
- (3) Three hot meals a day, including meat twice a day.
- (4) Compounds to be equipped with beds and mattresses free of charge.
- (5) Compensation in cases of injury or death.
- (6) A break of one hour for dinner.
- (7) Abolition of fines and beatings.
- (8) Abolition of " loafer " tickets.
- (9) For the right to stay outside the compounds ; for the right to leave the compounds whenever they like.
- (10) Every miner should get one pair of miner's boots and one blanket every three months free of charge.
- (11) For the right of the miners' wives to visit the compounds.
- (12) For the right to leave the mines whenever they like irrespective of the contract.

These are the general demands upon which our struggle is based. Of course there are in every mine specific and numerous more immediate demands, such as abolition of forced Sunday work, removal of certain overseers or indunas, &c., &c.

In general a big strike wave, big mass action cannot be expected in the immediate future, in view of the fact that the majority of the miners are not organised yet. To organise the miners, quite apart from the illegal conditions under which work must be carried on, is very hard for specific reasons. The miner is also a peasant and has not those proletarian traditions which the urbanised and detribalised town native proletariat has, and consequently his approach to things is slower, more conservative, &c. Secondly, another difficulty arises owing to the constant changing of the miners at the end of their 9 months' contract.

At first the revolutionary forces must be content with small things. Small strikes must be organised and based on the daily little grievances of the miners, strikes which come when all legal means have failed, when the workers have become convinced by their own experiences that the compound managers or any other official have definitely refused to grant them their demands, and that there is no other means of getting their demands except by a strike. A start must be made from the very smallest things, from the very smallest grievances, which may seem at first sight to be ridiculous to fight for. But gradually when the workers have gained their own experience from these small struggles, it will be possible to organise them to strike, to fight for more general demands, up to the mass strike, to a general strike throughout all the mines.

Only in this way can the revolutionary forces, the Communist Party, win the confidence of the workers and become the real vanguard of the working class, capable of leading the whole class in their struggle against imperialism and for an Independent Native Republic—a Workers' and Peasants' Government, as a stage towards the social revolution and communism.

MEDICAL RESEARCH FOR HUNGER AND WAR

By D. R. MORTIMER

MEDICAL research reflects the present "hunger and war" phase of British Imperialism. Every war problem can be duplicated and hidden in an apparently humane subject of civil research. Screened behind the beneficent features of the Medical Research Council there are masked a number of sub-committees whose main purpose is to carry on, by subterranean methods, preparations for hunger and war.

The Industrial Health Research Board now a Council of War

"The economical application of human effort during the late war through the investigation of the Health of Munition Workers' Committee, led to the formation of the Industrial Fatigue Research Board, as the Board was then called." (Annual Report, I.H.R.B., 1932.)

A comparison between the personnel of the Board in 1922 and in 1933 indicates the transition from the rationalisation phase to the war phase of the Board's activities.

1922.		1933.
William Graham, M.P.	<i>Chairman</i>	Lt.-Col. Sir A. Wilson, K.C.I.E.
D. R. Wilson (Inspector of Factories)	<i>Secretary</i>	Air Vice-Marshal Sir David Munro, K.C.B.

Here are two key positions. In 1922, occupied by two civilians—one a place-seeking, class-collaborating Labour M.P.; the other, a factory inspector. *In 1933 both are replaced by men of high rank in the armed forces.*

These are assisted usually by five medical and scientific members. In 1922 they were:

- (1) C. Sherrington, D.Sc., F.R.S. (Professor of Physiology, University of Oxford).
- (2) E. H. Starling, M.D., F.R.S. (Professor of Physiology, University of London).
- (3) C. S. Myers, M.D., F.R.S. (Director of National Institute of Industrial Psychology).
- (4) Sir J. Petavel (Director of National Physical Laboratory).
- (5) C. J. Bond, F.R.C.S., Factory Surgeon.

That is, there were four academicians and one provincial surgeon—chiefly rationalisers, not open war-mongers.

In 1933, however, the medical and scientific members of the Board bear grimmer features. They are :

- (1) Sir Francis Fremantle, K.B.E., M.D., a former Conservative M.P., who was *Assistant Secretary to the War Office Commission for the reorganisation of the Army Medical Service*. Moreover he was the special *Lancet* correspondent in the *Russo-Japanese* war. Is this a coincidence ? Or may it have some significance bearing in mind the dangers of a universal war of intervention against the Soviet Union ? This splendid jingo is the author of *Health and Empire* and *A Doctor in Khakt*.
- (2) C. G. Douglas, C.M.G., M.C., M.D. His very recent appointment must bear great significance, for he is one of the greatest experts in the world on determining the *gaseous exchanges* in the human body. He has unrivalled knowledge of the physiology of respiration. He has made with Haldane and Barcroft, the greatest number of contributions to our knowledge of respiration. The "Douglas" bag is famous the world over for experiments in breathing. He has written epoch-making papers on "Method for Determining the Respiratory Exchange in Man"; "The Causes of the Absorption of Oxygen by the Lungs." He has not only expert knowledge of respiratory gases, but also carried out researches on one of the high peaks of the world, described in a paper, "Physiological Observations on Pitnee Peak, Colorado," and collected information of tremendous importance for the physiology of aviators.
- (3) Sir John Parsons, C.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S., F.R.C.S., Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon to the *Forces*.
- (4) A. J. Hall, M.D., F.R.C.P. (Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of Sheffield); but also, for years, Lt.-Col. R.A.M.C. (T).
- (5) L. P. Lockhart, M.D., Medical Officer to Boots, the chemical and drug manufacturing firm. He has conducted researches on food-poisoning in canned foods. And canned foods become very important in time of food shortage and rationing !

The permanent civil servant is drawn, significantly enough, not from the Ministry of Health, but from the Home Office. Mr. Bannatyne, C.B., is permanent assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office. In this way, the rationalising, speeding-up and war work of the Board can be linked up with the activities of the factory inspectors who are also under the control of the Home Office. It would be foolish to ignore a possible connection with the police activities of the same Ministry.

This array of brass hats, chemical "defence" experts, munition factory inspectors, would be incomplete for war purposes without a Labour leader to beguile the workers. And the government have chosen well. Mr. E. Bevin, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, figures as a member of the Board, and who has a better record for collaborating with the employers for speed-up,

wage-cuts and rationalisation? And when the dockers discussed refusing to load Japanese munition ships, wasn't it Bevin who prevented such militant action being taken?

Factory Inspectors : From Workers' Friend to Employers' Ally

Marx was the first to pay tribute to the early factory inspectors who ruthlessly exposed the employers in the early days of the Industrial Revolution for cruel infringements of the first Factory Acts. Their unflinchingly honest reports on the terrible conditions in the factories and on child-labour remain a lasting tribute to their pioneer work.

But to-day, factory inspectors take part in research work on speed-up, rationalisation, and for war preparation. Mr. Wilson begins a series of investigations on accident causation which serve the double purpose of eliminating "accident-prone" individuals from the factories and the flying services. Dr. Sybil Overton, another Inspector of Factories, investigates the physique of women in industry, who carry anything from 6 to 36 tons a day. She discusses which is the best way for women to carry heavy loads—whether on their backs or their bellies, their shoulders or their hips. In the end, she recommends that women can safely carry loads of half their own body weight—i.e., about 40-50 pounds! In the Soviet Union women are not allowed to carry bolts and bars, bricks or sanitary pipes or to take part in heavy industry at all! Dr. Overton mentions this in her own report!

Under the grandiloquent heading of "vocational selection," psychologists can now sort out the most suitable types (suitable, of course, for the employers) for the various industrial undertakings. It is scandalous that the process of assisting employers to obtain just the kind of worker they need begins *while the child is still at school*. No time and expense is to be wasted by the employer or his own psychologists to find the right types. From "A Study in Vocational Guidance" (Rep. No. 33), children due to leave three selected schools within the following twelve months were subjected to intensive study, with the result that those "who entered occupations of the kind recommended have proved more efficient" than the others. How nice for the employers, but what an exciting finishing school for the workers—those last twelve months in the psychologists' laboratory! The vocational tests include those for good perseverators who tend to exhibit "rebelliousness," and the object of these researches is "to discover means of vocational selection which shall place industrial workers in positions where their normal reaction can be prevented from becoming unhealthy—and thus causing discontent." (I.H.R.B. Report for 1932, p. 37.)

But observe also the immediate adaptability of such investigations for war purposes. The Medical Research Council note "the value of

psychological tests for vocational selection in the Government services. *Some of these tests are now being used in the Royal Corps of Signals and the Royal Tank Corps.*" (M.R.C. Rep. for 1932, p. 118.)

"The Council are again indebted to the Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry for help in furthering these inquiries into vocational fitness, and accident proneness. They are also grateful to the London General Omnibus Company for the facilities it has given." How one thing links up with another! War Office and L.G.O.C.!

Observations on diseases (pneumo conioses) due to the inhalation of dust in miners have great bearing upon chemical warfare. For example:

Reference was made last year to an arrangement between the Council and War Office by which an investigation of the atmospheric dusts occurring in various industries would be made for the *Committee at the Chemical Defence Research Experimental Station, Porton.*

(M.R.C., 1932, p. 116.)

Among the publications of the Medical Research Council (M.R.C.) are twelve reports on the physiology of vision. The work is directed by a committee of nine, *of whom no less than six* have some connection with the armed forces. Here they are:

- (1) Sir John Parsons, F.R.C.S., F.R.S., Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Forces.
- (2) Group Captain E. C. Clements, O.B.E., R.A.F.
- (3) Major R. M. Dickson, O.B.E., M.D., R.A.M.C.
- (4) Sir William Lister, K.C.M.G., M.D., F.R.C.S., Late Cons. Ophthalmic Surgeon, British Expeditionary Force.
- (5) Surgeon Commander M. B. Macleod, M.B., R.N.
- (6) Air Vice-Marshal Sir David Munro.

The following admissions are made in the Annual Report of M.R.C., 1931-32:

At the request of the Admiralty the Council undertook to investigate the colour-vision requirements for the various branches of the navy. (p.95)

"Dr. H. Banister, with a part-time grant at Cambridge, has completed his enquiry into the relation between 'eye dominance' and skill with the rifle" (p. 95).

Air Vice-Marshal Sir D. Munro and Major Tucker serve on the sub-committee on the physiology of hearing.

For the War Office the Committee have continued their study of the qualities needed in anti-aircraft listeners, and of the best methods of training for this work. (p. 95-6).

The Dietetics of Hunger—The Iron Rations of War

Mass starvation is replacing individual fasting as the material for the scientific study of the minimal food requirements of the human body. Ninety months under-feeding of millions gives the possibility of more reliable data than ninety days' fasting of one human being.

Knowledge of normal quantitative standards of diet, at different ages and under different conditions of work and environment, has obvious practical importance. An inquiry was therefore made into the diet of 154 families of St. Andrews (Report No. 151), employed, unemployed, professional and industrial. With what object? To lay bare the obvious under-feeding of the unemployed and unskilled workers as compared with the professional class? No, although these facts come out clearly, because for "the unemployed, despite the fairly good return per penny spent, the total caloric intake is very low." Such information "is needed in times of grave national emergency when, as in the last war, rations for the whole nation may have to be calculated and imposed" (p. 4) . . . The consumption of protein and carbohydrate were definitely below the accepted standards. But more important:

The consumption of those foodstuffs deviated quite definitely also, and in the same directions, from the standards recommended by the Royal Society (Food) War Committee that were adopted as the basis of the practical measures by H.M. Government during the late emergencies of war. (p. 4).

Here we see disclosed quite frankly the starvation, war-ration basis of the researches upon nutrition. This report was published in 1931 and its principal author was Professor Cathcart, M.D., F.R.S. And ever since 1921, at least, the policy of the Ministry of Health, through its Medical Research Council, in relation to dietetic needs, has been the "*extension to other classes of the community of the precise evaluation of the physiological cost of work which was carried out by Professor Cathcart and his colleagues for the Army Medical Department, and placed on a sound basis the problem of rationing soldiers.*" (Ministry of Health Report for 1921, p. 100.) (My italics.—D.R.M.)

Dietetics and Imperialism

Empire Marketing Board for "Long Range Research" on Nutrition of African Tribes!

Medical research for hunger and war at home would be incomplete without complementary investigations covering the Empire overseas. The charitable (*sic*!) Empire Marketing Board was induced to part with £6,000 to send doctors to find out why the poor Akikuyu were five inches shorter and 23 lb. lighter than the neighbouring Masai tribe. Indeed,

The physique of the typical male Kikuyu may be judged by the recruiting statistics (Tate, 1917-18). Of the 16,754 men of one district of the Reserve who were called up during 1917 for enrolment in the Carrier Corps, 10,912 were immediately rejected on medical grounds.

Native labourers on railway construction showed a terrible incidence of death and disease among *men who were selected and medically examined before being accepted for work*, the obviously unfit being previously

eliminated. Out of 14,000 so employed in 1923, nearly 500 died and over 5,000 were admitted to hospital during the year. (Report No. 156 by Orr and Gilks, p. 6.)

It was suspected that chief among the causes of this low standard of health was inadequate and improper diet. To elucidate the problem Dr. Orr, of the Rowett Institute for Animal Nutrition, was sent out to Africa.

The problem is not confined to Kenya. It appears to exist in many different areas of our tropical dependencies. It may be judged from the introductory statements in the early part of this report that *the loss of health and efficiency attributable to deficient diet is, therefore, of considerable economic importance.* (p. 64.)

... Information obtained in investigations of this kind is calculated to hasten the *improvement of the physical condition of the native and to increase his importance as an economic factor.* From this material point of view alone the continuation of research on the nutritional conditions of natives is justified. The Empire Marketing Board has shown foresight in promoting such *long-range research*, which tends to the development of those overseas parts of the Empire with a large native population. (p. 65). (My italics.—D.R.M.)

Long-range research—for long-range cannon-fodder and long-range super-profits !

Vitamins for Famine Prophylaxis

Starvation brings diseases peculiar to itself. At this stage we have reached the saturation point of our argument. And it is here that our thesis becomes crystal clear. If it is correct that this is the epoch of imperialist hunger and war, where then should we look for the most feverish activity in medical research ? Does imperialism bring semi-starvation ? Then look to British India and the colonies for the diseases *peculiar* to starvation—scurvy, beri-beri, pellagra, rickets and lowered resistance to all infection. Does the economic crisis bring mass hunger with it ? Does war do likewise ?

Then is it surprising that the most intensive medical research is devoted to vitamins, those accessory food factors whose presence, albeit in minute quantities, is vital to the preservation of ordinary health and essential for warding off the famine diseases of hunger and war ?

Quite simple foods contain these essential elements. Nature has scattered them far and wide so that he who eats an ordinary mixed diet comes to no harm. Milk, eggs, butter, fresh green vegetables and fruits contain them all. But imperialism and the crisis of capitalism are making them rare. And they will be rarer still in the war that capitalism is preparing.

Fresh fruits and Vitamin C will be rare then. But ascorbic acid from red-pepper will stave off scurvy instead. The Vitamin deficiency

diseases are also campaigning diseases. A practical test of the use of a British anti-scurvy concentrate was satisfactorily carried out by the British Arctic Air Route Expedition, led by the late Mr. H. G. Watkins. (M.R.C. Annual Report, p. 79.)

Vitamin B, in its several varieties, has been extracted from yeast. This will be very useful in preventing beri-beri in any native troops who may be used.

Vitamin research is vital to a community which may be condemned to living on food that is both inadequate and canned. *And the pioneer in Vitamin research was the English bio-chemist, Professor Sir Gowland Hopkins, of Cambridge University.* The British Bio-Chemical Journal devotes more pages and papers to Vitamin research than any other bio-chemical journal in the world. And our Medical Research council issues a disproportionate amount of its funds for the same purpose. More and more is such research directed to the imperialist famine diseases (to Vitamins C and B against scurvy and beri-beri, and Vitamin A against infections)—and less and less to the present home varieties of avitaminosis. Vitamin D against rickets is being left out, relatively, in the dark—it is saved from neglect by its importance in dental disease. And Vitamin D needs sunshine for development !

The recently-published M.R.C. report, "Vitamins: A Survey of Present Knowledge," was so authoritative that it became an international best-seller. Over 10,000 copies were sold. Not bad for a technical report !

Science for War in the Schools

Limitation of the spread of scientific knowledge is one of the many methods used by the bourgeoisie and its chief lackey, the Church, to hinder the cultural awakening of the masses. But the last war gave British imperialism a fright. To grasp, by robbery and pillage, a vast empire from the undeveloped and backward races did not call for such high technical attainment. But to maintain such a predatory Empire against the attacks of other more highly-developed capitalist competitors, with the world already carved up, demands greater technical equipment.

Four times, in a short introduction to a report on "Natural Science in Education" (1927), are references made to the requirements of war :

And now it is the war and its needs that have made us once again conscious of the nation's weakness in Science. (p. 4.)

How necessary Science is in war, in defence and offence, we have learnt at a great price. (p. 5.)

Science becomes fashionable ; culture is broadening down from precedent to precedent to include science as of equal importance as the humanities in the equipment of an educated gentleman. The truest

reward for the inclusion of science in the general curriculum would be the ability "to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously the offices both private and public of peace and war." (p. 5.) Moreover,

The war . . . has increased the urgent need of action and, maybe, it has silenced some opposition (*i.e.*, to the teaching of Science.—D.R.M.) (p. 6.)

It is hard to see the justification for entrusting the lives and welfare of men to officers who have had no opportunity of getting a secure hold of the knowledge of the simpler laws that govern weather, food, personal hygiene, the applications of electricity and optics and innumerable other factors that affect the daily life and work of a soldier. (p. 163. *Ibid.*)

Facilities for the study of medicine occupy a prominent place in the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry; and special reference is made to opportunities for women students, and a note is made (for future reference?) that "Since the war broke out there has been a great influx of women into the medical schools." The admission of women into the medical faculties is not therefore a sign of the emancipation of women under capitalism, but the germ of a reserve force of civil doctors to release men practitioners on the outbreak of war.

Starving Schoolboys Reared on Cheap Food into Cannon Fodder

The recruiting sergeant begins to sniff for his victims long before they can queue up outside the recruiting depot, and while they are yet lining up for school. What is an adequate diet for growing boys? Why have a standard at all beyond a healthy boy's appetite? Because:

The need for criteria of "adequacy" in a dietary is felt most, of course, when circumstances demand *economy* in the choice of its constituents. (*Italics mine.*—D.R.M.)

So says Dr. Corry Mann, O.B.E., M.D., in report No. 105 ("Diets for Boys during the School Age"). This investigation was not carried out at Eton or at any large boarding school, but at a colony eleven miles from London, where there are collected boys from foundling hospitals, recently "rescued," destitute children of unknown parentage. They are "saved" so as, ultimately, to be herded in batches of 40-50 into emigrant ships, or drafted into the navy. Dr. Mann was surprised at the improvement in the boys' height and weight, especially when fresh cows' milk was added to the diet. And now the government knows how to ration schoolboys cheaply and how to rear them into emigrant empire-builders and good cannon fodder! All in the name of medical research!

Mobilisation of Mental Defectives

The halt, the blind and the lame may escape mobilisation in the next war though, no doubt some sort of national service will be found for them. But this much is certain: *the mentally deficient* will be called up for

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essential services, even perhaps for the making of munitions. The Industrial Health Research Board devoted special researches into the "Occupational Fitness of Mental Defectives" with reference to their manual dexterity and to their payment, not on a fixed regular salary, but according to "a bonus system (*i.e.*, incentives)." (p. 36, I.H.R.B. Report for 1932.)

Even the mentally disordered are being pressed into the service of imperialist research. In some important centres the malarial treatment of general paralysis of the insane is used more as a source of knowledge about malaria than in the interests of the general paralytic. This is the reason that alternative fever producing substances are not investigated in England with the same thoroughness, although it is imperative to find less harmful pyretic methods than the induction of malaria.

Statistical Evidence

A statistical analysis of the number of publications confirms the war and hunger direction of the work of the M.R.C. Just over 170 reports have been directly issued by the Council. About 50 per cent. have direct or indirect reference to the troops. There are 11 reports on dysentery, chiefly on material provided by the last war. These are included as well as 2 reports on enteric fever. There are 12 reports on vision and 2 on hearing; together they form a disproportionate number for these special senses. Previous remarks have made it clear that these have either direct or indirect war applications and they are included in the war statistics. Among 4 reports on Flying is one entitled "The application of Air Force Physical Efficiency Tests to Men and Women." The detailed analysis follows (the figures in brackets represent number of reports):

Cerebro-spinal Fever among Troops (5); Dysentery (11); Enteric (2); Venereal Disease (including Wasserman reports) (15); Vision (12); Hearing (2); Flying (4); Food Poisoning (reference canned food, &c.) (4); Nephritis (Trench Fever) (2); Nerve Injuries (2); Surgical Shock (from Wounds) (3); Wound Infection (3); T.N.T. Poisoning (2); Burns (applied to air crashes) (1); Sundry (Soldiers' Heart; quinine, &c.) (11). That is to say, the total number of reports for War are 79.

There are also:

Nutrition (including Vitamins) (11); Rickets (5); Dental—related to Nutrition (5); Infants—Nutritional disease (2). This makes a total of 23 reports for Hunger.

All the data given are available to the public. They are drawn from published official reports, and the personal details are culled from the Medical Directory, or are collated from published internal evidence in the reports cited.

Although it publishes a separate annual report, the Industrial Health Research Board makes no statement of accounts. The Medical Research Council, however, was allotted £139,000 last year. Of this about £60,000 was spent in its own research institutes. But a larger sum, £79,000, was divided between: (a) Research grants to outside scientific workers and expenses to university and hospital workers; and (b) *Industrial Health Research Board*.

The grants and expenses to research workers are usually niggardly. For expenses, £5 to £30 are frequently acknowledged by recipients at the foot of their published papers. The grants, of course, range higher. But to the 500 research workers who receive grants or expenses, we should be justified in assuming a figure of £30,000 to £40,000 as ample cover. The rest, *i.e.*, about £40,000 to £50,000 must go to the Industrial Health Research Board. For this they published five brief reports (from 30–60 pages on the average), costing 1s. 3d. to 2s. 6d.; and were responsible for nine other papers in technical journals. Where does the money go? Possibly in unpublished reports!

Our Answer

Doctors, nurses and all medical workers know more than most, that war means death. They are not taken in by phrases that “war means work”; that “war means revolution.” From Great Britain and Ireland nearly a million men went to their death. About 10 million soldiers lost their lives in the last war; from 20–30 million were maimed; while Professor Hersch, the Swiss expert in vital statistics, estimated that about 30 million civilians died as a consequence of the World War.

Medical workers, who are at all conscious of the imminence of another war, have a duty to laymen. They should spread their knowledge of the horrors of war; they should warn everybody of the terrors of chemical and gas warfare; they should join in research pointing out the effects of the crisis, the Means Test, on the health of children. More, they should organise with others who feel the same way,¹ to struggle against hunger and war and link themselves up with the militant working class movement which is the only bulwark against starvation and death.

¹The British Anti-War Council (Medical Section), 53 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

A DISCUSSION OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

By E. F. CARRITT

[Mr. E. F. Carritt is a Fellow of University College, Oxford, and a Lecturer on philosophy. We print his contribution as a discussion article, since it expresses many of the difficulties and questions which are often raised with regard to Dialectical Materialism, and which it will be of value at the present stage in Britain to clear further and reply to in a subsequent article. We invite contributions from those interested, although available space is necessarily limited.—Editor LABOUR MONTHLY.]

FINDING myself in sympathy with the objective of Communists (though not usually with their strategy or tactics) I am disturbed to hear, both from many Communists and from many of their bitterest opponents, that Communism is inseparable from a philosophy which I find hard to understand and, so far as I understand it, impossible on philosophical grounds to accept. This article is an attempt to get clear what I understand that philosophy to be, my difficulties in accepting it, and my reasons for thinking that it has no necessary connection with the economic or social doctrines of Communism. I have expressed myself somewhat provocatively in the hope of stimulating discussion.

Apart from Marx and Engels the following are the books which I chiefly quote or cite :

Bukharin, *Historical Materialism* (Authorised Translation, 1926).

Deborin }
Riazanov } *Marx-Engels*, Archiv. I., II. (1927).

Lenin, *Empirio-Criticism* (1909 translation. Kvitko, 1927).

Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (Edition, Riazanov ; Translation, E. and C. Paul, 1929).

Dialectical Materialism is a Protean theory to interpret. Its more systematic exponents modestly disclaim any competence beyond that of expounding or filling in the outlines of its first authors (*ipsi dixerunt*) Marx and Engels, though, in fact, I think they go beyond this, for Marx at least never propounded a system. He criticised other philosophies which he thought incompatible with his own social and political views, and in so doing no doubt implied a philosophy of his own ; but his accounts of it are occasional, merely expounding points opportune to particular occasions of controversy or propaganda. Engels' projected

work on *Dialektik u. Natur*, the notes for which are collected by Riazanov in *Marx-Engels Archiv. II*, was never completed but formed the basis for the *Anti-Dühring*.

Besides these scattered pronouncements by the founders, and the attempts to systematise them by the disciples, we have therefore two clues. First, the relation of the new philosophy to those which it is intended to replace, and secondly, its relation to Communism, as part of whose propaganda it was developed.

The philosophies with which it is contrasted are two, that of Hegel whose dialectic it borrows while rejecting his idealism, and that materialism whose sceptical consequences it tries to escape by the introduction of dialectic.

The simplest thing Marx has to say himself about his materialism is that whereas Hegel's philosophy was standing on its head he proposes to set it right way up. This he does by laying down that an idea does not create reality but is simply reality translated into the human head. (*Capital*, second edition, Preface, 1873.) And Engels similarly insists, as against Kant, that causality and all natural laws apply to reality as it is in itself and do not depend upon our knowing them (*Anti-Dühring*). This, so far, amounts to no more than a realistic theory of knowledge and, I should have thought, was not inconsistent with Hegel. Lenin appears to admit as much (p. 74).

The simplest thing Marx has to say about his dialectic (in one passage of the *Critique of Political Economy*, 1859) would, if taken alone, differentiate it emphatically from that of Hegel as being solely a subjective process of thought by which we advance from abstract and therefore incomplete and partly erroneous conceptions to fuller and more concrete truth. There is a similar passage in *Die Deutsche Ideologie*.

But these mere germs of a philosophy are further developed both on the materialistic and the dialectical side. Already in 1842-3 Marx, in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, had compared historical development to the mutation of physical elements and to organic life, both vitalistically interpreted. His last allusion to dialectic seems to be in the second edition of *Capital*.

Marx (also in his *Critique of Political Economy*) says that all man's spiritual activities depend on his social relations and these upon his economic situation and ultimately on the material means of production he can control. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness; the material mode of production determines the *general* character of their social, political, intellectual and artistic processes. When Engels similarly insists that matter precedes spirit and conditions

it throughout, we seem to be getting nearer to materialism in the philosophic sense.

But the dialectical element develops *pari passu* and insists on distinguishing this so-called materialism from what it calls the old, abstract, metaphysical or mechanical materialism which regarded matter as inert and passive, an inorganic aggregation of discrete particles, capable of motion and therefore of re-arrangement but not of growth or development, and ultimately "we know not what." Matter, it is insisted, really develops new qualities and develops by the Hegelian method of thesis, antithesis, synthesis. This we learn by the empirical observation of nature. And matter by its very nature develops into mind capable of knowing matter and itself. (Cf. Mirsky, *The Outlook of Bertrand Russell* in LABOUR MONTHLY, February, 1932.) The application of the doctrine to social and economic theory is that human society develops by internal antagonism or class conflicts—at the present stage between the bourgeois and proletariat, those who own capital and those who own nothing but their labour power,—and that this antagonism must be synthesised by the socialisation of capital as a means of production.

In nature the same dialectical laws of change maintain themselves, through all the complications of endless movement, which rule over the apparent contingency of historical happenings. And these are the same laws which give the guiding thread to the historical development of human thought and of which we gradually become conscious in reflection. . . . The vital point for a dialectical conception of nature is that oppositions and differences do indeed exist in nature, but only relatively: their supposed absolute reality (vorgestellte Starrheit u. absolute Gültigkeit) is only introduced into nature by our reflection.

(Engels, Foreword to *Anti-Dühring*.)

This seems to me an attempt to have it both ways: perhaps it is dialectic. I suppose it means that the actual development of reality falsely appears to us (as movement did to Zeno) as if it were the co-presence of contradictory attributes and therefore impossible. This seems to be the view suggested by Mr. Clemens Dutt in the LABOUR MONTHLY, February, 1933.

The description of his materialism by Marx himself (though he does not here use the word) in the *Critique* offers little more than a historical generalisation, implying a guiding clue for further research, to the effect that legal and political institutions in all countries and periods owe their nature to the economic conditions rather than the reverse, and that so also, in general though less directly, do all the beliefs and actions of men. This preponderating influence has been neglected by past historians. Engels, I think, develops both the materialist and dialectical sides still further. On its dialectical, he explicitly applies the process to reality and affiliates it to the *panta rhei* of Heraclitus. Writing to Marx, July 14,

1858, he says the cell is the Hegelian *Ansichsein*, and it follows the Hegelian dialectic pretty closely until it attains to the Idea in the complete organism. Dialectical also is the fact that motion can be transformed into heat, light, chemical affections, electricity and magnetism. Everything he says (*Anti-Dühring*), is in process of change, everything acts upon and is acted on by everything else. The fault of the old materialism was to conceive things as in isolation and at rest. Dialectical materialism recognises that the dialectic of thought, in advancing from this abstract view to the admission of development and growth owing to mutually opposing forces, is only following the dialectic of things. Everything both is and is not, death as much as life is a process. Dialectics, unlike metaphysics, comprehends *both things and our ideas of them* in their essential connection and motion. Science shows us that nature evolves dialectically, Hegel guessed this and Darwin proved it; history no longer appears as a chaos of pointless atrocities but as human evolution by conflict. But Hegel was an idealist, *i.e.*, he believed that thoughts were not the more or less abstract pictures of real things, but, conversely, that things and their evolution were only the realisation of the Idea existing somewhere from eternity before the world was. If knowing is to be explained by being and not conversely, then legal and political institutions and systems of religion, philosophy, art, are produced by economic conditions and it can be shown that socialism is the necessary solution of the class struggle.

Engels proceeds to give instances of objective dialectic in reality :

- (1) The triad seed-plant-seeds or egg-bird-eggs.
- (2) $-a \times -a = a^2$. (The dialectical principle, as I understand it, would seem to require that $+a \times -a = a^2$, but this is not maintained.)
- (3) The geological negation of one stratum by the next (synthesised, I suppose, by the third).

Engels forsoes the objection that an egg or seed may be negated by eating it, but replies in effect that if you want dialectic you must negate in a way that admits of synthesis. From Engels' notes for *Dialektik u. Natur*, it is clear that he founded dialectic on two facts mainly : (1) the transformation of motion into heat, light, electricity ; (2) the evolution of species. What these have to do with Communism I cannot, after patient effort, understand. He admits that his science may grow "out of date," *i.e.*, you cannot predict by dialectic in science. Why, then, in politics ? If dialectic cannot tell what heat will turn into till science has discovered, it cannot tell what capitalism will turn into till empirical economic and social sciences discover that. We may think they have done so ; if so dialectic can be discarded.

Obviously the theory is becoming more complicated. We have now not only the dialectic of thought advancing from abstract error or partial truth to fuller more concrete truth, and not even only the dialectic of those human institutions which, since they partly depend on thought, might be expected to follow its dialectic (*e.g.*, tyranny—licence—order, depending on men's developing beliefs about society). We have also the same term dialectic applied to the evolution of species, the growth of organisms, the movement of matter and even to mathematical formulas. We are indeed told that the dialectical movement of thought is only a result of the dialectical movement of matter. It is not yet clear whether this means that we follow and grasp in thought the changes of what we are thinking about (realism) or that our thought changes because of changes in things we are not thinking about, *e.g.*, changes in our bodies and brains (materialism). The dialectical movement, whether of thought or things, seems, unlike Hegel's, to be always a temporal process (with the unfortunate exception of the mathematical examples), but it is not clear whether it is always progress. Engels speaks of spirit as the *highest* development of matter. In one place he speaks of dialectic as a process of progress or retrogression (*Anti-Dühring*), but elsewhere (*Feuerbach*) says that both material changes and our thoughts about them, with all apparent accidents and in spite of all momentary retrogression, ultimately constitute a *progressive development*. Nothing, he says, is permanent except the *unending ascent from lower to higher*. Such certainty of progress would seem hard to establish empirically for a materialism which professes to detest teleology. Yet on the other hand it seems indispensable, if we are to prove from dialectic that capitalism must result in Communism rather than in chaos.

I take it then that so far as the explicit pronouncements of Marx and Engels go, dialectical materialism implies three things :

- (1) That there really is a physical world unaffected by our knowing it but capable of being known.
- (2) That this world existed before there was any knowledge of it and that knowing minds develop in and from it.
- (3) That the behaviourism or scepticism which this latter thesis might seem to imply can be escaped by conceiving matter dialectically. The primal Matter is not matter in the vulgar sense—abstract matter contrasted with abstract mind—any more than Hegel's Idea was an idea in the vulgar abstract sense contrasted with things. Marx's Matter and Hegel's Idea are just names, unfortunately borrowed from common language where they have another meaning, for the fundamental whole within which mind and matter in the vulgar senses develop, or at least

in which they can be found by our abstracting analysis. Plekhanov seems to recognise something of this sort (p. 10) when he says that the chief mistake of Spinoza was to call the one concrete substance, of which abstract thought and abstract extension are attributes, God. By any other name it would smell sweet enough.

This is sometimes put by saying that dialectical materialism is the synthesis of the old materialism and of idealism, but indeed dialectical materialists display even greater hostility to the former than to the latter.

Dialectical matter is the concrete whole (or undifferentiated original) within which the elements (or potentialities) of knowing subject and object known can be discovered (or develop). And the relation of these two elements (or the development of these potentialities) is determined by the nature of the whole within which they have their being, so that to think of either in abstraction from the other is a partial or erroneous conception to be cured by mental dialectic.

Dialectical knowledge is true and true of a reality which is neither our knowing process nor affected by it, but which is of such a nature as to be knowable, since it owes its whole nature to being a reality of a kind within which minds come to be and to know. Knowledge is absolute in the sense that there is no unknowable thing in itself, but it is relative in the sense of being always incomplete.

(To be continued.)

BOOK REVIEWS

THE LOOT OF CHINA—TWO RECIPES

China : The Pity Of It. By J. O. P. Bland. (Heinemann.) 8s. 6d.

Land and Labour in China. By R. H. Tawney. (George Allen and Unwin.) 7s. 6d.

IN China to-day the forces of Japanese imperialism are concentrating on a new war in the north, while the League of Nations, through the Lytton Commission, prepares the ground for a policy of partition and foreign control.

These two aspects of imperialist aggression—direct intervention and partition through the medium of “international co-operation”—are set forth by J. O. P. Bland and R. H. Tawney. The former quite openly upholds armed intervention. Concerted action of the “friendly” powers and “an imposed introduction of those financial and administrative measures which would make an effective government possible” are to re-establish China as a market for international trade through “a policy of disinterested co-operation for the benefit of the Chinese people.” The process is described in these words :

Assuming, firstly, the possibility of a concerted policy of intervention ; assuming, secondly, a refusal on the part of the leaders of the Kuomintang to co-operate in, or permit, the application of such remedial measures as the situation requires ; assuming, finally, that after due warnings and the expiration of a reasonable time limit, no effective steps have been taken or guarantees given, for the suppression of banditry and the disbandment of superfluous troops, the Powers might proceed to devise and apply a definite scheme of concerted operations. (P. 339.)

The writer leaves no doubt about the kind of operations to be applied. In a reference to June, 1925, when Chinese strikers were massacred in the streets of Canton by British and French forces, he says : “ If, after the unprovoked attack on the British Concession at Shameen in June, 1925, the China squadron had been permitted to destroy the Pearl River forts and the Whampoa Military Headquarters, the Cantonese would speedily have seen the error of their ways ” ; but at the same time he maintains that social revolution in China is impossible because “ China’s civilisation became static two thousand years ago.”

Mr. Tawney’s method is different. His is the reformist standpoint which recognises, at least tacitly, that the forces of resistance in China are gaining strength, and that some alleviation of immediate conditions must be found if imperialist interests are to survive. But he sees the cause of existing conditions not in the imperialist systems which, with the help of their tools, the war-lords, have ravaged China and held back its economic development, but rather in the fact that China is an “ organism of a peculiar kind ” ; and he takes refuge in a determination to “ confine himself to the task of attempting to note the salient facts in her present economic situation.”

The account of actual conditions, on which detailed information and a great number of useful references are given, reveals something of the real meaning of imperialist exploitation.

Out of nearly fifty million agricultural holdings, 36 per cent. at the time of the last survey were of less than one-and-a-half acres, and only 6 per cent.

were over 15 acres. Rates of interest paid by farmers to the moneylenders are 36 to 60 per cent. In some parts of the country "shortage of food on a scale sufficient to cause widespread starvation" is rarely absent; and, according to a Chinese official statement (1931) in the province of Shensi, "3,000,000 persons had died of hunger in the last few years, and the misery had been such that 400,000 women and children had changed hands by sale."

The author reaches the conclusion that there is even some reason to believe that "the condition of the rural population in some parts of China may be actually worse than it was two centuries ago."

The details that are given in regard to the conditions of industrial workers reveal a picture no less terrible:

Not only are hours preposterously long, and wages almost incredibly low, but part of the work is often done by relays of cheap or unpaid juvenile workers, sometimes imported from the country, and occasionally, it is alleged actually sold to their employers, in shops which are frequently little better than barns, and in which the most elementary conditions of health and safety appear to be ignored. (P. 149.)

In the final chapter, "Politics and Education," Mr. Tawney gives his "remedies": western officials to be placed at the disposal of the Chinese government, Chinese officials to be trained in Europe, and the League of Nations as the "natural institution" to assist the Chinese rulers in "improving the processes of government." The League, he adds significantly, "can do what can be done by no single state."

L. N. R.

"SNOBBERY WITH VIOLENCE."

Snobbery with Violence. By Count Potocki of Montalk. The Here and Now Pamphlets, No. 10. (Wishart.) 1s.

THIS pamphlet is even more aptly named than the author intended, for it positively reeks with snobbery. In spite, however, of the author's insistence on his aristocratic blood and his lofty contempt for those of the prisoners who did not share this advantage, the pamphlet is of value for its graphic portrayal of some of the more glaring evils of the British prison system. Since the appearance of that comprehensive, but unreadable, tome *English Prisons To-day*, the first-fruits of the conscientious objectors' long sojourn in various jails, very little has been written on this subject and the fallacy that prisons are now much better than they were in those days, has been sedulously spread among the humanitarians. This pamphlet, therefore, with its revelations regarding the scanty and unwholesome diet and the disgusting sanitary conditions should be widely circulated.

The author, being a Pole, is refreshingly free from any illusions about British superiority, and it will be a shock to the ordinary Englishman—and particularly to those "well-meaning" but not far-seeing men, the Prison Commissioners—to find that the sanitary conditions in a London prison caused him to remark: "Actually, in their own way, the English are the dirtiest race in the world."

Count Potocki is a second Narcissus and his insolent assumption that he is vastly superior to the ordinary prisoners (for whom, apparently, the most unhealthy and disgusting treatment is "better than they deserve") is sufficiently nauseating, but his account does bring out the fact, which prison reformers

have done their best to hide from us, that prisons are still substantially what they always were—inhuman, bestial, degrading.

A large and increasing number, not only of Communists but of workers who are being driven to “crime” by starvation, are inmates of our prisons. It is up to us to see to it that the humanitarians are not allowed to enjoy the complacency of ignorance. There are already many militant workers who are qualified to write an equally vivid but sounder and more comprehensive picture of prison life. In the meantime this pamphlet gives a sufficient answer to much of the humbug talked by the Chairman of the Prison Commissioners.

J.B.

AN IGNORANT ACCOUNT OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE.

Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia. Edited for the New Fabian Research Bureau by M. I. Cole. (Gollancz.) 5s.

THIS book, which consists of essays by different writers on various aspects of life in the Soviet Union, is a very uneven production. Some of the essays, notably Mr. Pritt’s on the Russian Legal System, are well-written studies, containing new and interesting material. Others are superficial and contain nothing which has not been better described elsewhere. Others again, particularly Mrs. Cole’s and Rudolph Messell’s, remind one forcibly of Emrys Hughes’ description of :

The half-truths and misconceptions that are circulated by the dilettante academic intelligentsia that look at Russia patronisingly through superior middle-class spectacles without having the slightest understanding of what is going on.¹

The chapter on Agriculture by John Morgan is a disgrace—one is left wondering how any organisation which calls itself a Research Bureau had the face to publish anything so superficial, misleading and inaccurate on such a highly important subject. Mr. Morgan visited Verblud, a Soviet farm in the Northern Caucasus, in the middle of the wettest harvest on record. He went out into the fields between the storms and hunted for a combine at work (did nobody tell him that one doesn’t try to thresh grain while it is wet, outside a lunatic asylum?). Naturally enough he didn’t find a combine at work and so he rushed back to Rostov, declaring that Verblud (and therefore, apparently, all Soviet farms) was a failure. He did not, as any ordinary person would have done, seek the manager of the farm and discuss its difficulties and achievements; he did not discover that though the wheat had been washed out, the maize and sunflower crops were good, or what Verblud’s harvests were like in years when it was not visited by torrential rains (in 1930 its harvest was excellent). He did not take the trouble to inspect Verblud’s large and flourishing training college, its experimental station, its housing and cultural amenities. He tells his readers nothing about the organisational methods of this or any other Soviet farm. In fact he tells us nothing of any value about either Soviet or Collective farms; machine tractor stations he doesn’t consider worth mentioning; the enormous value to the “dark” villages of the spread of light and culture, which the wave of collectivisation has brought with it, he hasn’t even noticed. He spends most of his space in a melancholy wail about “good land and a hungry country” and assiduously spreads the theory that the Soviet agricultural policy has been a failure.

¹*Forward*, September 10, quoted by Stalin in his speech of January 7.

The fact that in the last four years the cultivated area has been extended in Russia by 52 million acres, while it has been reduced in the other grain-producing countries ; that the annual collection of marketable grain has increased from 500-600 million poods to 1,200-1,400 million poods ; that the Five-Year Plan in collectivisation has been exceeded three times, and that in all other points the Five-Year Plan for agriculture has been very much exceeded—all these facts have entirely escaped Mr. Morgan's notice. Instead he bemoans entirely imaginary grievances—as, for instance, that the peasants cannot spend their roubles because they live “ far from towns lucky enough to have state shops, the only kind permitted.” The ignorance of such a statement is colossal. Has he really never heard of the village co-operatives ?

That there are difficulties in regard to the food supply of the Soviet Union nobody would deny. Even the unprecedented success of the collectivisation campaign and the great increase of productivity in the collective farms as compared with the individual farms has not made it possible as yet to keep up with the rapidly-growing requirements of the population due to the influx of new workers into industry (an increase of over 70 per cent. since 1927), and the amazingly rapid advance in purchasing power and in the general standard of living. It is only the spread of collectivisation and of large-scale mechanised agriculture that has enabled the Soviet Government to cope with the situation and to mitigate the results of the drought of 1931 and the rains of 1932, which, under the old conditions of agriculture would have produced widespread famine. One might have expected some recognition of this from Mr. Morgan, and some description of Soviet and Collective farms and tractor stations, their difficulties and achievements, their organisation and their amenities. Instead of which we get a dreary wail, full of inaccuracies, finishing up with suggestions for a “ permanent solution ” every one of which are already in operation, and have been, to my own knowledge, ever since 1930. And this is what Mr. Cole dignifies by the name of “ the first objective survey that has yet been possible of the most recent phases of the Russian policy of socialisation in agriculture ! ” Any ten-year old schoolboy in a Russian village could have written a more accurate and comprehensive survey of the subject in one-half the space.

J. B.

WHO WERE THE MOLLY MAGUIRES ?

The Molly Maguires. By Antony Bimba. (Martin Lawrence.) 3s. 6d.

TERRIBLE though the conditions of the Pennsylvanian coal regions be to-day, a comparison of them with the horrors of mining life in the middle of the last century testify to the grand work done by American working-class fighters during the last seventy years. This book recalls the fierce and bitter struggles on these coalfields in 1842, 1849, 1868, 1870, 1871 and 1875, in the last four of which the Workingmen's Benevolent Association (W.B.A.), the union of the anthracite miners, and the so-called Molly Maguires played a prominent part.

In the W.B.A., from its inception, was staged the inevitable struggle between the trade union bureaucrats who stood for compromise and the militant rank and file who stood for militant action. The coalowners and capitalist press of the period styled this militant element the “ Molly Maguires ” and attributed to the Mollies not only every imaginable crime committed by police agents and others, but also every militant action taken by workers anywhere in the United States of America.

They say there was once really an agrarian secret society in Ireland called the Molly Maguires led by a woman of that name. This may well be, but, as the author of this book makes clear, there never was an organisation called the Molly Maguires in America. Actually the score or so of working-class leaders murdered by the boss class as Molliés, were the militant fraction of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.) working in the W.B.A., made up of Irish miners.

During the famine years of the 'forties and the two decades of coercion following them, Irish workers and peasants flocked in their thousands to the U.S.A. to escape from the tyranny and exploitation of British imperialism. And in America they found themselves face to face with the old enemy in a new guise. Those who penetrated to the anthracite coal region in Pennsylvania found that the coal bosses used against them the same weapons of violence, fraud, calumny and starvation which formed the armoury of the British landlords in Ireland. And after the long series of defeats and indecisive victories culminating in the temporary destruction of the American miners' union in the long strike of 1875, what wonder that the Irish turned, to continue the unequal struggle, to their old tried organisation in which they had so long baffled the boss class in their own country, which forms of organisation were at the moment incarnated in the A.O.H.

The great grandfathers of these Irish miners had probably been Whiteboys or Oakboys and waged war on the English landlordry in the middle of the 18th century, their grandfathers were, may be, United Irishmen who nearly brought the whole British Empire crashing at the end of the century, and their fathers, Ribbonmen, against whom O'Connell invoked the aid of the English soldiery to save the landlords from their doom. We know for certain that many of them had been Confederates and Chartists before emigration. So now they organised in the A.O.H. and acted first as a ginger group in the W.B.A. and then became its backbone and, in a sense, its successor. The story of the gallant struggle of the transplanted Irish rebels on the American working-class economic front, and the exposure of the campaign of violence and calumny waged against them by their boss class and reformist opponents so vividly and informatively related in this book is rich in lessons for the British, Irish and American workers.

A. B. F. W.

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Professor H. Levy, Conway
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